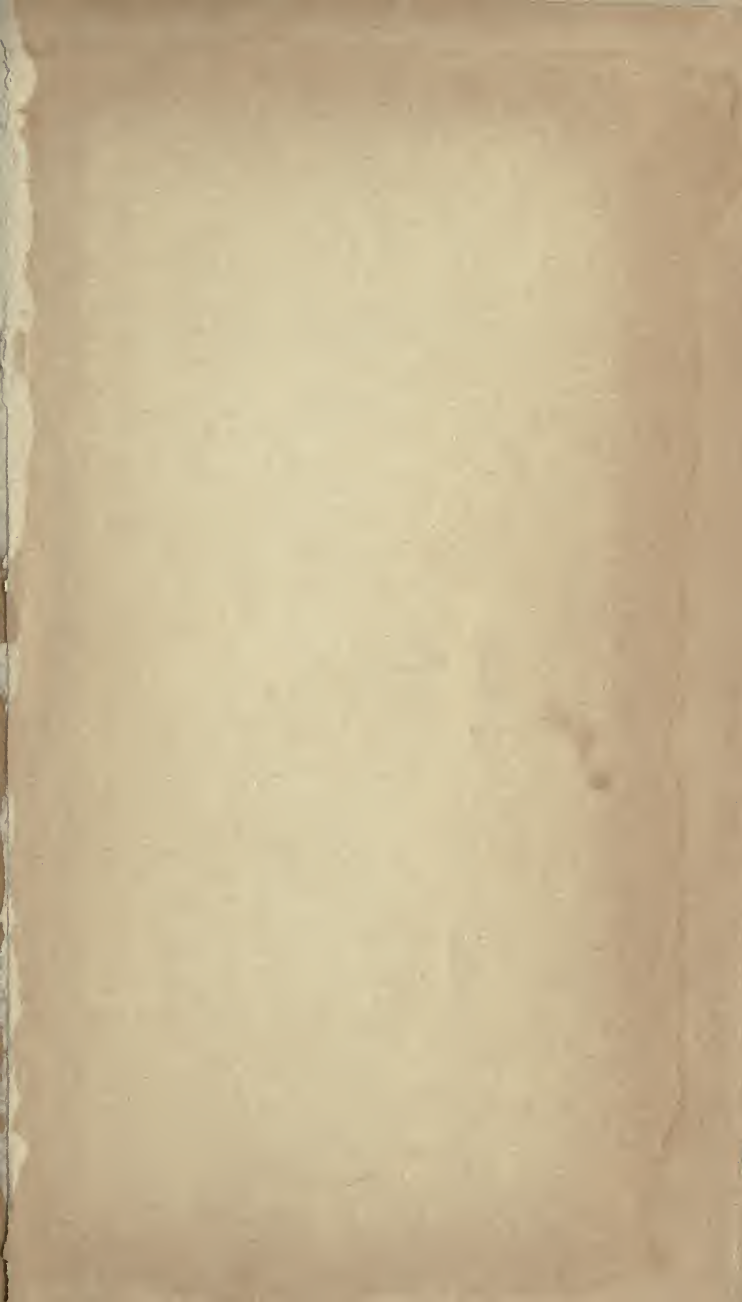
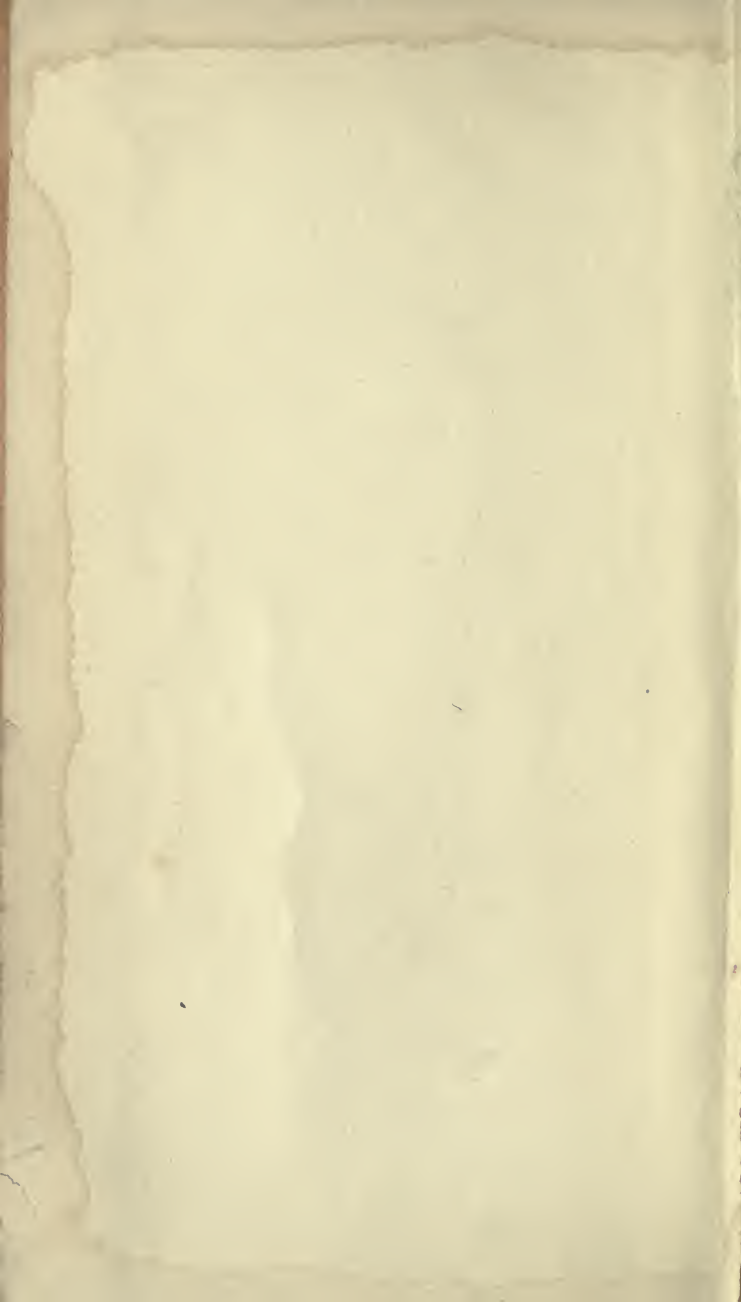


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# CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

*Brown*

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*The glamour of the East is like the glamour of  
the Stage: it appeals chiefly to those in front of  
the footlights.*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book was born in China and has spent two-thirds of his life there. He has lived in North China, in Mid China, and in South China. He is conversant with the official language. The book is the outcome of personal observation.

LONDON, 15th February 1912.





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# CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL PROLOGUE

THE Manchu dynasty has fallen. However pigheaded, however unprogressive and reactionary, however antagonistic to foreign intercourse the Manchus might have been, they have always had the saving grace of weakness. Concessions could always be extorted, commercial relations could and were, without difficulty, forced upon them. The Young China party is composed of two main divisions. Both are united in their antagonism to foreigners, but whereas one party desires to utilise

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

foreign capital, brains and methods in the development of their country, the other is all for the total exclusion of the foreign element. Should the progressive anti-foreign party prevail, China's relations with the Powers will be much the same as Japan's. The predominance of the reactionary anti-foreign party would be a very serious thing for China.

The man in the street, whose interest in China may have been excited by the periodical outbreaks of fanatical fury which beset that country, will perhaps wonder who the Manchus are, and how it is they have been able to rule and control an Empire of four and a half millions of square miles and with a population of four hundred millions. The history of China dates from about 2000 B.C.; the civilisation of which the Chinese are so proud dates from nearly as early a period. Dynasty after dynasty has established itself in China, grown effete, and been supplanted by force. It was in one of

## HISTORICAL PROLOGUE

these civil wars, in the early part of the seventeenth century, that the Manchu-Tartars, a warlike and nomadic people who had conquered Manchuria and the Liao-Yang peninsula—the scene of the Russo-Japanese War—were recalled in byone of the parties. The Tartars were successful, treacherously overthrew the dynasty in whose aid they were nominally fighting, and established the Manchu dynasty.

In administration, commerce and all the attributes of civilisation, the Chinese were immeasurably superior to the conquerors, who were intelligent enough to make no alterations in the methods of government and in the customs and laws which they found in acceptance. They, however, insisted on the shaving of the head and the growing of the pigtail. This custom, originally a sign of servitude, soon lost its significance and became a universal observance of which the whole nation is peculiarly proud. The movement for the cutting of the queue has,



## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

however, made great progress during the last two years.

Evidence of foreign relations with China can be traced into the dim, distant past. The Greeks and the Romans were aware of the existence of China; the Persians traded with her; Buddhist and Christian missionaries found their way there; the Venetian Marco Polo travelled in China in the Middle Ages and left us vivid accounts of the gorgeous court of Kublai Khan. English merchants were established in Canton in the sixteenth century; the Jesuits were a powerful influence at the Court of the first Manchu Emperor, Shun Chih (1644)—the disputes which led to their fall from power will be set forth in the chapter on Missionaries.

Serious international relations, however, begin with the present Manchu dynasty. In 1793, in the reign of K'ien Lung, the first foreign diplomatic mission of importance presented itself at the Manchu Court—a British mission, headed by Lord



## HISTORICAL PROLOGUE

Macartney, who was received — though he did not know it—as the emissary of a tributary State. The first error was made, the effects of which it has taken several wars to destroy. We went to the Chinese cap in hand; as a consequence, they got the idea that we were a tributary State, begging for favours. They underrated our strength, for no Oriental can understand the stronger treating the weaker with civility and subservience, preferring requests in the place of demands and seeking, as a favour, for that which he is in a position to take by force.

Up to this time trade had been carried on by the English merchants at Canton under private arrangements with the local officials. The English merchants were subjected to all the vexatious restrictions, exactions and abuses that the local magnate chose to indulge in—and they were many. Trade, however, paid, and our countrymen put up with everything, so confirming the Chinese idea that they were a weak

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and convenient prey to plunder and insult. The British Government sought to put matters on a treaty footing, and Lord Macartney's mission was the first attempt and the first failure. The second essay was that of Lord Amherst's mission in 1816. He was called upon to kowtow before the Emperor, refused, and was denied an audience. Lord Amherst's emphatic standpoint was the first step towards rational relations between the two countries. It was absolutely necessary to impress upon the Chinese Government and people that England was not a tributary nation to be dealt with as an inferior. The Opium War of 1840, the "Arrow" War of 1857, the Anglo-French combination against China which ended in the Treaties of 1860, the Japanese War of 1894-95, and, finally, the Boxer business of 1900, all tended to impress upon the Chinese the advisability of treating the "foreign devil" as an equal, entitled to courtesy and consideration.

## HISTORICAL PROLOGUE

The Chinese contention was a strong one. They said—and one party of Young China says so to-day—that they did not want the foreigner or his trade ; that the country was self-supporting and self-sufficient, and that if the foreign powers wished to break into this circle they must do so on China's terms. But even granting that China is entirely self-sufficient, it is debateable whether any country in the world can, in the interests of the others, be allowed a complete isolation. The ruling caste in China is marvellously conservative, and the foreigner is hated to-day as much as ever. The only difference of opinion in China is whether foreign methods and capital are or are not of use to the Middle Kingdom.

The causes which led up to the present revolution are treated in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

THE revolution in China is the outcome of the spread of popular education. The evils, the oppressions and exactions of the officials, the terrible poverty, the famines and floods, and the thousand and one calamities that beset the teeming millions of China have always existed. The new element which has brought things to a head is the consciousness of the existence of these evils, or rather the knowledge that these evils are not inevitable, that they are the result of mal-administration, of the political and official corruption that diverts the taxes from works of public utility into the coffers of the officials. A corrupt and effete bureau-

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## CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

cracy is treading on dangerous ground when it begins to contemplate reforms of any kind; but its fate is assured when those reforms begin with popular education and the liberty of the press. It were advisable to purge the political machine of its corruptions and abuses before putting the masses into a position to comprehend and understand the existence of such shortcomings. Nothing has altered appreciably in the administration of China, official peculation is still the rule, not the exception; bribery, oppression, corrupt courts, and the thousand sins of omission are there, as they always were. Chinese statesmen have confined their reforms to giving education to the masses, so that the latter now see those evils, heretofore considered inevitable, in their right light. This is the new state of affairs that has lent itself so admirably to the revolutionary propaganda. The result is the inevitable downfall of the system. But what is this system of

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

bureaucracy, against which the people have risen, time after time, in outbursts of ignorant, disjointed and misdirected fury, only to be put down with ruthless severity ?

The Manchus, who number approximately four millions all told, are nominally, as we have seen, the rulers of China. In reality China is governed by the *literati* class : the aristocracy of China is the aristocracy of letters ; though there are a few, a very few, hereditary titles, some held by Manchu and some by Chinese, there is no aristocracy such as we know it. The *literati*, or educated class, is the class from which the entire public service is recruited by open competitive examination, in the results of which, however, bribery plays an important part.

The administration of China is the most decentralised in the world. The headquarters are at Peking, the seat of the Emperor. Here we have six or so Boards, viz., Foreign Office, Board of

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## CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

Works, War Office, etc., Board of Rites and Ceremonies, etc. There is, in addition, a Grand Council, which is in daily touch with the Court, and is the controlling element. The Council and the Boards at Peking are in nominal control of the Empire, which consists of eighteen provinces and three dependencies. The Provincial Governments consist of an elaborate civil service, at the head of which is the Governor, or Governor-General in the case where two or more provinces are combined. The provinces enjoy practical autonomy: the Governor-General is, in practice, independent of the central authorities, though their power to recall him acts as a check. Provided he sends up the Imperial taxes, and maintains order in his Province, he has a free hand. The less he bothers the Central Government, and the less his Province obtrudes on the Imperial notice, the better pleased are the central authorities. In the administration of law and order; in



## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

the provision, maintenance and equipment of an army ; in all provincial legislative affairs, the Governor-General is an absolute autocrat.

Governors have frequently defied the Central Authority with impunity and success. In the 1900 business, when the late Dowager Empress threw in her lot with the Boxers, Yuan Shih-k'ai maintained order in his province of Shantung. The viceroys of Nanking and Wuchang (the scene of the present revolution) did likewise in the Yangtse provinces, under an arrangement with the foreign consuls. In internal affairs, the Governors are entirely independent : in external matters, their attitude depends largely on their individual characters. In the early days of the Manchu dynasty the highest posts in Peking and the provinces were allotted to Manchus ; but the latter were gradually replaced by loyal and more competent Chinese, until at the present day the vast majority of officials in active employ are

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## CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

Chinese and not Manchu. There are still some Manchu statesmen in the highest positions; but the majority of high officials are Chinese. Though there are still Manchu garrisons under the command of Tartar Generals at the principal towns of China, the troops of which they consist are troops in name only. The whole Manchu population of China consists of four millions, approximately: each and every Manchu is in receipt, by mere virtue of belonging to the race, of a periodical dole from the Imperial Treasury. The race has lived on this charity since the founding of the dynasty, and is consequently now effete and has passed away. How is it that a small body of Manchu conquerors have been able to hold an immense Empire for three hundred years, when practically all the officials, high and low, have been Chinese? How is it that Chinamen, like Li Hung-chang and Yuan Shih-k'ai, have placed their abilities at the disposal of a foreign dynasty in its

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utmost peril? It is simply that the Manchus have become absorbed by the Chinese proper, till they are indistinguishable from the Chinese. The revolution was not fundamentally directed against the Manchu dynasty: it was directed against the system of foul bureaucracy which is essentially Chinese and not Manchu.

The Manchu dynasty was, of course, hated, as a foreign dynasty must inevitably be. It was also, in some sense, the fount and figurehead of the detested bureaucratic system.

The war cry "Out with the Manchus!" was merely a blind catch phrase for the ignorant. It served its purpose to excite to fever pitch a racial enmity which has long been dormant. The high Chinese officials know that the movement is against them, is against the system for which they are more responsible than the Manchus. The movement was one of democracy against bureaucracy; but of this more in a later chapter.

## CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

Just as the governors are independent of the Central Authority, so, though in a lesser degree, the minor officials are independent of the Governors. Provided the minor officials preserve order, remit the taxes regularly and keep out of the notice of their superiors, they have a free hand. There is no appeal proper from a magistrate to his superior. A complaint may be submitted by petition to a higher authority, but it will receive attention only at the arbitrary decision of this magnate, who, in general, is as little anxious to interfere with his subordinate, as he is to be interfered with by his own superiors. Illegal exactions and oppression naturally are at home in this atmosphere. There is no redress, so the Chinese submit patiently to the inevitable and endeavour to propitiate their officials in every possible manner. When one goes too far, there is a riot, and he is killed or gets a salutary lesson, for a riot brings on him the invidious



## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

notice of his superiors, and generally leads, without any inquiry into the morality of the conduct of his office, to his dismissal.

Such a vague check to oppression leaves room for the most unparalleled abuses.

Mention should be made of the censors. This is a body of men, belonging to the *literati* class, who are entitled to present memorials—supposed to be privileged—to the high officials and to the throne, censuring any official, great or small, who, to their knowledge, has been guilty of malpractices. Upright censors are, however, frequently beheaded or otherwise got rid of: others are used as pawns in the political game. Censors' memorials are, as a rule, shelved.

All the officials are appointed after public open competitive examinations, which are held periodically in all parts of the country: hence, in theory, it is possible for the son of a poor man to attain the highest posts in the State.

## CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

The subjects of the examinations are the ancient classics, and the standard is so high that no one has a chance who cannot afford a long and expensive tuition. There is no system of scholarships, such as might lead an English Board School boy into Class I. of our Civil Service.

The practical result is that official appointments are entirely in the hands of the *literati*, the gentry of China.

The Civil Service rules China, and the Civil Service is entirely recruited from one class.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FAMILY THE UNIT

THE patriarchal system is complete in China. The Emperor is the father of the people and all the myriad officials and underlings are *in loco parentis* ; the people are in their absolute control, just as a child in China is in the absolute power of its parents. Little fault can be found with this system if the paternal influence is exercised in a benevolent and intelligent manner, but in practice it is seldom so exercised. The whole fabric of Chinese Government is based on the acceptance of this power and responsibility of the parent. The individual—supreme in the civilisations of the West—is of no account in China : the family is the unit. Every

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## THE FAMILY THE UNIT

member is answerable to the family and the family is responsible for each member. A group of families forms a village, or a neighbourhood with its elders or headmen. Just as the family is responsible for its individual members so is a neighbourhood for its inhabitants, the District Magistrate for his District, and so on up to the Governor who is responsible for his Province, and finally the chain of responsibility is complete with the Emperor who is answerable to the Divinity for his Empire. In China this is no mere theory, it is the practical basis on which the Government is established.

Famines, floods, droughts and such calamities are held to be manifestations of the Divine wrath at Imperial shortcomings: at such times the Court betakes itself in all humility to one or other of various Temples, and prays that its errors may be pardoned and the people's distress relieved. Disturbances in a district, arising from whatever cause, lead

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

almost without exception to the local official's dismissal. The headmen of a village are held personally responsible for a robbery, or any untoward occurrence in their neighbourhood. The crime or defalcation of an individual implicates his whole family. In such a case the magistrate's first step is to get the whole family under lock and key. If it is a question of money, the family has to meet the loss. This aspect of the family question will be dealt with in the chapter on the Administration of the Law.

It follows that if such a severe view of the responsibility of the family is to be taken, the latter must be allowed unlimited control of the individuals of which it is comprised. Similarly, the village headmen must be possessed of substantial powers.

With regard to the magistrate, he is, as we have seen, an absolute autocrat in his own district. [The term Magistrate is misleading: the Chinese official so

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## THE FAMILY THE UNIT

designated (the Chih-Hsien) holds a position in no way analogous to that of magistrates in England: he is the administrator of a district. The Chinese do not separate the administrative and judicial executives.]

To return to the family: the individual is in complete subjection to the family; or rather the individual members of a family are interdependent. The successes and reverses of each member affect the whole body. The advantages of this system are patent from the administrative point of view. No better deterrent to crime could be devised.

Taxes are easily collected: if a man's whereabouts are difficult to discover, the exactions are made from his family. The poor are supported by their own people. Fraudulent bankruptcy is out of the question—the family must pay up. If a man is a fugitive from justice, his whole family and collaterals can be seized. When this system is extended to groups

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

of families such as form a village, a community, or a neighbourhood, it can easily be seen how administrative work is simplified. A police force is hardly necessary. The people police themselves: they are personally interested in the maintenance of order, in the prevention and detection of crime, and in the regular payment of official exactions. It is this system of mutual responsibility that has made the Chinese the most peaceable, most easily governed and most tolerant people in the world. An abuse has to assume gigantic and absolutely intolerable dimensions before an explosion of protest occurs. When such an outburst does, however, take place, it is apt to be of a violent and ungovernable character. Such a system would appear to stifle individual enterprise: in practice such is not the case: the struggle for existence is so keen that no member of a family would be allowed to be a shirker: individual effort is as strong in China as



## THE FAMILY THE UNIT

elsewhere, but there its aim is to raise the family : ambition is not entirely personal : the family might seem to act as an encumbrance, but as there is no shaking it off an added incentive to effort is thereby given.

Such are the advantages of the family system—it makes for peace and order and for cheap administration, but at what cost ?

There is no liberty of the individual : he is liable for arrest at any time for the crimes of his relatives : but then, personal liberty is absolutely foreign to Chinese ideas.

Commercial enterprise is paralysed : the merchant may at any moment be sold up to satisfy the defalcations of a member of his family. This aspect of the case does not, however, worry the Chinese Government, who do not give industrial enterprise the consideration which is attached to it in Europe. In the Chinese order of things the nation is divided into

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

four estates, scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants — last and theoretically least.

Tolerance is ensured for the most outrageous of abuses, and while abuses are patiently borne with there can be no advancement of civilisation, no conception of reforms, no struggle for ideals, no progress of any sort or kind. These are the main objections to the family “unit” system of China: there are many evils connected with it of less importance. When Young China comes into her own, it will be for her to establish the freedom of the individual, to make the individual the “unit.” No reform will be of any consequence if this main question is neglected. But will the new Government have the will to do so? This dominance of the family and subjection of the individual is but part of the system of ancestor worship which finds universal observance throughout the Empire. Will Young China abolish ancestor worship?



## CHAPTER IV

### ANCESTOR WORSHIP AND FILIAL PIETY

ANCESTOR worship is *the* religion of China : it is universally observed, and is the most formidable obstacle to the propagation of Christianity. That aspect of it will be treated in the chapter on Missionaries.

This doctrine claims for a man three souls : on his death one soul reposes in the Ancestral Tomb, another in the Ancestral Tablet, and a third is borne to another world to receive such rewards or penalties as have been merited. The Tablet is a piece of oblong wood inscribed with the deceased's name and other particulars : it is placed in some conspicuous nook in the home and incense

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

is kept burning in front of it night and day. The descendants prostrate themselves before the Tablet and worship at the Tomb at stated intervals. The object of ancestor worship is to propitiate the dead : should the observance be neglected the Chinese believe that the most disastrous calamities will overtake the descendants. The Chinese believe that the deceased leads in the other world—presumably with the assistance of the third soul referred to—an existence not unlike his life on earth, and that he requires there those things which he found essential here. It is in this belief that they burn paper effigies of his wife, his horses, dogs, sedan chairs, etc. Cases are not uncommon when the actual wife has been buried with him, she electing rather to die than to be his widow. The woman is not always, however, a free agent. Family pressure is often brought to bear upon her in this regard in the hopes that the family prestige will be considerably

## ANCESTRAL WORSHIP

augmented by her voluntary decease, which is considered an act of the highest virtue.

Food also is required by the deceased in his new regions : and it is duly placed on his tomb.

Such is the ancestor worship that is observed punctiliously throughout China. Does an enlightened Chinese who has come into contact with foreigners and foreign ideas believe in it ? It is difficult to say : there can be no gainsaying he observes the rites. The average Chinaman is an intelligent materialist, he thinks little of the next world, he has no religion as we understand it. He carries out the duties of his position, he observes the customs which have been hallowed by antiquity, and he is perfectly satisfied with himself.

Ancestor worship is the outcome of the exaggerated filial piety that obtains throughout China, and filial piety is the basis of that family system which is, as we have seen, the foundation of the

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entire administrative system of China. The liberation of the individual from the thralldom of the family will mean the abolition of ancestor worship. When this is done a great obstacle to intellectual and material progress will have been removed. Filial piety is in China the greatest of all the virtues; and filial impiety the blackest of crimes. As a corollary there is no country in which old age is so respected as it is in China. The young are never noticed when their elders are present. However healthy such an attitude may be, there are limits to tolerance of exaggerated affectation. Amongst educated men a man claims and obtains respect, not by virtue of his age, but by reason of his attainments, his character, and his intelligence.

But this is a diversion. Filial piety is inculcated into the unfortunate youth of the country morning, noon, and night. Instances of the virtue are commemorated in nearly every treatise. History relates

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## ANCESTRAL WORSHIP

of a man who killed his infant child to make a medicine for his infirm and sinking father. This man's conduct—vile, impossible and outrageous to Western ideas—is held up as an example of virtue.

Thousands of grotesque incidents are quoted to incite the young to active filial piety.

A parent may administer any amount of correction to his children, but woe betide the child who strikes back, or is rebellious. Parental cruelty is kept in check by public opinion—an enormous force in Chinese life.

The most horrible punishment known to the Chinese Penal Code is reserved for parricides, the dread “ling chih,” which is execution by the slicing process, during which 1000 cuts are made, the last of which is supposed to be the *coup de grâce*. (In practice—and this horrible method of execution is practised to-day—death ensues considerably earlier.)

Filial respect is a very real and moving

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

force in the modern China with which we have to deal. Let us hope that the enlightened statesmen of Young China will free it from the exaggerations and abuses into which it has fallen, and which tend to make a natural and universal virtue a curse to the nation.

From a consideration of the family we now come to a review of the position of woman in the Empire with the concomitant question of Marriage as the Chinese observe it.



## CHAPTER V

### STATUS OF WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

It has been said that the status of her women is a very good criterion of a country's civilisation. There are few states in the world where women hold a more lowly position, or are treated with less respect than is their lot in China: yet China was a civilised country—enjoying precisely the civilisation she has to-day—when we in England were painted savages. The very excellence and antiquity of her civilisation has been its curse. A self-satisfied confidence that perfection had been attained precluded all progress and China to-day is eclipsed by the upstart civilisations of the West.

In China Woman is a nonentity. She

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

is a household drudge, her education is entirely neglected, no money is spent on her, and she is married off out of the family at the first opportunity. The birth of a daughter is no signal for rejoicing; she is frankly not wanted; but it is very different in the case of a son. The explanation is that a daughter cannot worship at the ancestral shrine. A man must have a son—failing a natural heir he adopts one—to carry on the ancestral worship which is so important to the Chinese mind. If you inquire of a Chinaman how many children he has, he will reply with the number of his sons, omitting his daughters altogether: *e.g.* if he has five daughters and two sons, he will say he has only two children. The difficulty of obtaining an accurate census is ascribed in part to this idiosyncrasy: as the girls preponderate in China as elsewhere, their omission makes a very appreciable difference in the returns. The only approximately reliable returns are those giving

## STATUS OF WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

the numbers of households—from these a rough estimate of the total population can be made. Again, if one asks a man what place he holds in his family, he will also omit all count of his sisters, and will say he is the eldest or the second even though there are two or three girls before him.

Inquiries such as the above are marks of polite breeding in Chinese circles. One must be careful, however, of making any inquiries, or any mention whatever of a man's wife: that would be the height of bad taste. Woman, then, is merely tolerated: she is the indispensable vehicle by which a man provides himself with descendants to worship at his ancestral tomb. This being the goal of a girl's life, it is obvious that she is of little value to her own family: though, however, on her marriage a sum of money, varying according to the position of the parties, is paid over by the bridegroom to the bride's parents. Authorities differ on the

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question of infanticide : the latter is certainly not practised with male offspring, and it is equally certain that with regard to female children it is a very widespread custom. The mortality amongst children in China is excessive, and as children cannot be the subject of ancestral worship, their burial receives but scant attention. This, of course, does not apply to the well-to-do, but to the great masses of Chinese to whom life is a hard struggle. Children's coffins are often made in the most careless and hasty manner ; a wooden box of any kind is utilised, or a coffin is dispensed with altogether, the body—coffin or no coffin—being frequently left on the highway, thrown on to a burial-ground, or consigned to the river. In North China baby towers, built for the reception of dead and unwanted babies, are a familiar sight. It is this that has led many observers into overestimating the prevalence of infanticide. The putting away of females in their infancy is, how-



## STATUS OF WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

ever, there can be no doubt, a practice largely observed amongst the poorer classes. The life of a girl is not a bright one. She meets no members of the other sex ; she is betrothed on the first occasion that presents itself to a man she has never seen : marriage, however, is no release ; it adds to her troubles, for in exchanging the parental roof for her husband's she becomes the drudge of her mother-in-law in addition to being the obedient slave of her lord and master.

A Chinaman on getting married does not set up a new establishment : he merely imports his wife into the family home where his father and mother and perhaps grandfather and grandmother are installed. This is not quite so disagreeable as it would seem. Chinese residences, which are ground floor only, are laid out in oblongs ; the rooms form the top and the two sides, and there is a courtyard in the middle : a house consists of three, four, or any number of such courtyards, every

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

one of which is self-contained and semi-secluded. An additional courtyard can always be added if the land is available. The bride becomes, in accordance with the Chinese ideas of filial piety, the recognised servant of the old people. Her turn comes, of course, when she herself becomes a mother-in-law.

At a very early age in the girl's life—in the first or second years—her feet are tightly swathed in bandages, and she becomes a cripple for life. One sees specimens in London shop-windows of the small embroidered shoes,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, that full-grown women wear in China. Various explanations are advanced of the inception of this cruel and preposterous practice: the real idea is, however, a sensual one. The Manchu women are not maimed in this manner. The women of the immense floating population of the Southern Provinces have, as a necessity, natural-sized feet: and in general the poorest classes—the classes whose women

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## STATUS OF WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

work out of doors—are not crippled. It has been the fashion lately amongst the defenders of Chinese customs to set off the prevalence of tight-lacing amongst European women against this crippling of Chinese female infants. The cases are not analogous : One aspect is enough ; the women of Europe are free to do as they like—the Chinese are crippled in their infancy for ever and anon : the æsthetic side of the question is a matter of individual taste. The Chinese affect to admire those misshapen extremities, which they term “golden lilies” and similar names. To us the sight of a young and otherwise healthy woman tottering across the road is as horrible as it is sad. These women walk with difficulty : it is a question of balance not of active pain. One sees women so afflicted bearing burdens on poles and doing other coolie work without obvious discomfort. The lower class women are as a rule, however, happily free from this curse.

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The anti-footbinding movement, which owes its inception and success to the efforts of Mrs. Archibald Little, one of the most widely known authorities on China, is making rapid progress in its good work. The women themselves are strongly in favour of reform when the matter is put to them. They are apt, however, in that patient acceptance of evils which is so aggravating to reformers, to consider the practice as something inevitable—and as such to be uncomplainingly observed.

One cannot doubt that one of the first steps of Young China will be to release their women from this barbarism.

No attempt is made to fit a girl to be the companion and intellectual equal of her future husband: such an idea is entirely foreign to the Chinese conception of marriage. When she has learnt to cook, sew, and mind the house she is—to their ideas—fully prepared for an alliance. She is taught nothing else:

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if she has learnt to read or write, she has done so by her own efforts. The great majority of women of all classes are totally illiterate. When the household work is done the day is given up to gossiping and scandal. Perhaps one of the circle has learnt to read; she will read the paper or a novel to her companions, or a street story-teller, for a "cash" or so, relieves a few hours' monotony. But in general the recreation of the women is talking, and they are all experts at it. One of the seven grounds on which divorce is granted is talkativeness. Her tongue is a woman's one weapon in China, and she uses it constantly and unsparingly. The Chinese for some reason or other always talk at the top of their voices: they will yell at you in an ordinary conversation taking place indoors when you're within a yard of them. Where a Chinaman yells, a Chinese woman positively shrieks: a Chinaman shuns a dispute with a female as much as he shuns the

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law courts, which is saying a good deal. One of the things that strike the Occidental most in China is the incessant and terrible noise. Nothing is done quietly ; workmen and carriers howl and grunt in unison ; pedestrians yell at each other, shops and restaurants emit large and strange volumes of sound, theatres are truly deafening, street criers are numerous, but would be overlooked amongst the ordinary pedestrians were they not assisted by cymbals, drums, bells or other instruments of a kind calculated to attract attention. Amidst the confused babble of a crowded Chinese thoroughfare the Westerner has no chance of hearing his own voice : it is as difficult to carry on a conversation there as it is in any of the tube railways of London. The noises emitted by the taxis and motors of London would pass practically unnoticed in one of the frequented thoroughfares of a Chinese city.

The Chinese woman's weapon is her tongue, and by virtue of it she is not



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always the down-trodden slave of man that the laws and customs of China decree she shall be. A henpecked husband is not uncommon in China. However, his remedy is easy if his courage does not fail. He can divorce her for this alone; or he can order her to her own apartment, refuse to see her again, dally with his second or third or fourth wife—for though a Chinaman has only one wife, he is allowed any number of concubines, who hold a position but slightly inferior to the first wife's—he can flog her or do anything to her in reason. Public opinion and the law will always be on his side.

Having had her feet bound in extreme infancy, and having been taught nothing save the details of domestic drudgery, the spare time of her life having been spent in gossip, the Chinese girl is, at the age of fourteen, ready for marriage. Long before this her parents will have been looking out for a husband for her : cases are far from uncommon in which parties



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as yet unborn are betrothed, the respective families agreeing that in the event of one being blessed with a son and the other cursed with a daughter a marriage shall be considered settled. By the time a girl is fourteen the parents will, without doubt, have found a suitable mate ; the negotiations in this as in most things in China are carried on through a go-between, who is a friend of both parties and receives a fee. In theory a groom and his bride do not see each other until the marriage is over ; a preliminary view is, however, generally arranged by the go-between. Still, a Chinaman views matrimony with extraordinary indifference and marries the girl his parents choose for him without hesitation. His first view of her is frequently on the night of the wedding. The power of the parents over their children is shown again in this question of matrimony. The latter's meek subservience to others in a question which concerns their individual selves so closely, is

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another of the evils of submission that the downfall of the family system will abolish. The acquiescence of the man in his parent's choice is less to be wondered at since he knows that should he later meet and desire another girl, he can add her to his establishment in the nominal capacity of second wife. This is in practice the usual thing. The obedience of the woman, to whom the marriage is a finality, is accounted for by her status; she is a mere chattel. When the amount of money to be paid to the bride's parents has been arranged by the go-between, to the satisfaction of the parties, the betrothal is announced; a lucky day is then discovered and fixed for the marriage. The marriage ceremonies are celebrated with great pomp, show, and specially noise. There is no solemnisation of matrimony, such as we know it in Europe. Authorities differ as to what actually constitutes the binding part of the ceremony: if the fact that a marriage had taken place had to be

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established in a Court of Law, it would probably be done by calling the evidence of first-hand witnesses : there is no marriage certificate, no entry in an official marriage register ; there is indeed no official intervention of any sort whatever, nor is there anything remotely connected with religion involved in a Chinese marriage. The procedure differs in different parts of the Empire. Roughly, it is as follows :—

On the morning of the day fixed for the ceremony, the groom sends his card and a letter to the bride's house. The bride is then placed in a red sedan chair and carried to her future lord's abode. Arrived there, she makes due obeisance to the bridegroom's parents, and then to her husband. A family banquet is then held, at which the bride waits on her parents-in-law, and on her husband. Proceedings break up at a late hour : three days afterwards the newly-married couple pay a ceremonial call on the bride's parents ; there is nothing corresponding

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to our honeymoon. The proceedings are all calculated to impress upon the woman the superiority and overlordship of the man. The red sedan chair is used only for the purpose of carrying brides to their new homes. The chair is a closed-in one, heavily draped in red silk; it is totally unventilated and cases have been known of women who have died from suffocation in them. This chair, emblematic of matrimony, is used only when the bride is becoming the wife proper of the man; a concubine is never so transported. A woman only rides once in the red chair, for a widow cannot be a wife proper for a second time: if she contemplates or is driven to remarriage she can only go as a secondary wife or concubine, when she is not entitled to ride in the red sedan. The Chinese belief that a man still owns his wife in the next world is responsible for this disqualification of the widow; were she allowed to remarry, it would mean that in the next world she would



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have two husbands—impossible to Chinese ideas. The man may, of course, replace his deceased wife, for public opinion and custom allow him as many wives in this world or the next as he can afford. China is the country of early marriages: the paramount necessity of begetting male offspring, which is the result of the observance of ancestral worship, drives the youth of China into matrimony at an age when the European boy is just leaving school. There is scarcely a Chinaman of age who is not married; old maids are unknown. If a family cannot marry their daughters off as first wives, they dispose of them as secondary wives. The latter course is often preferred: the daughters are disposed of as advantageously as possible, and the position of secondary wife to one man is often more acceptable than that of wife proper to another. There is no disgrace about the former course, a secondary wife has not the stigma that the position of a mistress brings in Christian

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countries. The late Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi was a concubine in the establishment of the Emperor Hsien Feng, who, however, nominated his son by her his heir. The wife proper is, as a rule, not at all opposed to the arrival of a concubine : it must be remembered that her marriage was not one of inclination : she does not hold, nor does she aspire to hold, her husband's love : she has no cause for jealousy, her prior position is acknowledged, and the arrival of the concubine relieves her of some of her arduous duties.

In considering the various aspects of the Chinese household, one must keep in mind that there enters into the relations between a man and his wife no idea of companionship, no mutual respect or esteem, few, if any, of the sentiments which bind two people together in Christian countries. When a Chinaman invites you to dinner, his wife is never present ; she is never introduced to anybody ; she is kept strictly in the background.

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There is scarcely a man over twenty unmarried in China ; the surplus of women is absorbed by the recognition of virtual polygamy. Everybody gets married, and everybody gets married early ; and yet the oldest profession in the world flourishes in the Middle Kingdom to an enormous extent. This is rather a disquieting fact. In England we feel that if social conditions could be so altered as to permit of early marriages, the perennial question of the prevalence of the social evil would be solved. In China, men and women marry in their teens, yet probably no country in the world is such a happy hunting ground for the *demi-monde*.

The crime for which England ruthlessly crushed one of her greatest men of letters, receives no very severe condemnation in China. The morals of the East are not our morals.

Marriage is so unattractive to the Chinese maiden that suicides after betrothal are not infrequent : in some parts of the

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country whole numbers of girls will form a sort of suicide club, all engaging to put an end to their lives sooner than be married. Against this, however, must be placed the levity with which death is faced in China, the land of suicides.

Divorce is theoretically the simplest of matters: in practice it seldom takes place. It is so much simpler and more dignified to ignore a recalcitrant wife, and to allow a concubine to take her place. Amongst the adequate reasons for divorce, are barrenness, talkativeness, and disobedience. A divorce, however, entails inter-family adjustments; the woman's relatives can prove extremely troublesome; the attempt might even lead to litigation with all its attendant horrors. In practice the wife merely finds herself neglected in favour of a secondary wife. Adultery on the part of the wife is, however, a very serious crime, entailing the supreme punishment. The standard of chastity amongst the wives of China is

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for this and other reasons an extremely high one.

People who have lived in China are often asked if the women of China are beautiful. Beauty, of course, is in the eyes of the beholder.

There are many Chinese and Japanese women who are pleasing to look upon ; but the author has never seen—and he has not been unobservant—a Far Eastern woman to whom he could apply the term beautiful.

There are no Chinese prototypes of the exquisite beauties of English Society and of the Stage ; the glorious toilettes of the West are unknown to the Far Easterns. The Chinese woman is not out to kill. Her dress is designed to conceal the figure, her hair is plastered up with grease and is altogether too horrible, her feet are crippled, her eyes are mere slits, and her high cheek bones complete a most unattractive appearance. Her face is yellow ; the wonderful complexion of the people



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of happier climes and cleaner habits is denied to her. She also has no idea of the art of making-up. She rouges violently on all occasions ; she is never seen out without a thick layer of vermilion paste on her face. There are no stage beauties, for all feminine characters on the Chinese stage are played by men. This is not so noticeable as it would be in England. The Chinaman grows little hair on his face, and he finds little difficulty in successfully impersonating the opposite sex. The exquisite grooming and gowning of the European woman is foreign to Chinese ideas. The Chinaman wishes his women-folk to look dowdy, and they certainly do not fail him in this respect. Such native women as have adopted European dress have not been a success. The Far Eastern woman is—compared to Western standards—short-legged, undersized, and flat-chested. The women of Japan have taken to Western modes in large numbers ; few are, however, able to carry a gown.



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There is a unanimous consensus of opinion amongst foreign observers that the native costumes are more becoming to the ladies of the East than the latest Parisian modes.

Judged by our standards, the Far Eastern woman is not attractive. There are indications that she is being weighed and found wanting by the ever-increasing numbers of Westernised Chinamen.

## CHAPTER VI

### PUBLIC OPINION—"FACE"—SENSE OF HUMOUR

PERHAPS the most striking characteristic of the Chinese is their subservience to public opinion. Public opinion is everything in the lives of the people. This is the natural consequence of the discredit into which the administration of the law has fallen.

The people have been forced to set up some other authority to adjudicate in the disputes and dissensions incidental to everyday life. Public opinion has taken the place of the Courts. Arbitration is the rule in China. The subjection of the individual to the community is again instanced in this controlling influence of

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public opinion. There is no definite law, decisions are arbitrary and influenced by every consideration but that of abstract justice, the Courts are mere vehicles of official exactions, plaintiff and defendant are equally subjected to oppression, and resort to litigation is had only when a man has no more to lose. This avenue, then, is closed to the Chinaman, who is driven to accepting the arbitration of public opinion, which is as a result of paramount importance in local life. The Chinaman's bugbear is undoubtedly "face." To lose "face" is the most horrible thing that can happen to him. One may rant and swear at him in private, and he will receive it all with lamblike complacency; repeat the performance in the presence of others, and he will resent it bitterly, and will attempt retaliation. He has no sturdy independence: he does not justify himself to himself, but to the world. He lacks the courage of individuality: he is but one of a herd, and comports himself as he is

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expected by the herd to comport himself. He is the antithesis of Nietzsche's Superman.

His whole life, from the clothes he wears to the opinions he ventures, is ruled by a rigid and elaborate code of etiquette which is universally observed, even in its minutest details.

There is no privacy in China: the inhabitants pass their mortal days in the full glare of publicity. The desire for privacy would betoken the existence of something that required concealment. What we would term his private life, is hopelessly public. His house is not his castle, his doors are always open, friends, relatives, and servants are ever coming and going; his affairs are always public property. Nor is he dissatisfied; the more open and public his life, the less likely is he to suffer from troublesome disputes, or be drawn into disastrous litigation. He can hardly understand the desire for privacy evinced by the foreigner,

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whose doings excite a proportional curiosity amongst his servants. They will break in on him with the flimsiest of excuses ; his letters and dispatch boxes provide endless interest. Used to absolute publicity, they cannot conceive the foreigner's mania for keeping personal letters and papers under lock and key. In restaurants and hotels—mere inns—the customer eats and lives, as a matter of course, in the public gaze. If the foreigner does likewise he will attract little attention, his meal perhaps being witnessed by a dozen or so idlers, who will stand about the doorway or boldly enter and endeavour to start a conversation with the Westerner. Those of the latter who are not inured to the habits of the yellow man ; who are unable to eat under a shower of affability and saliva poured on them by an inquisitive Chinaman ; whose stomachs are turned by the odour that emanates from the curious one's person, and who, in consequence, close the door to secure privacy,



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will defeat their own end, and bring upon themselves the interest and curiosity of the whole neighbourhood. The author has eaten many a meal under the interested gaze and good-humoured interrogations of quite appreciable crowds.

An intense fear of ridicule is a natural concomitant of exaggerated subservience to public opinion, and this is merely aggravated by the keen sense of humour that is a noticeable characteristic of the race. Old residents of China can tell of many an ugly situation relieved by a timely jest. The Chinese are not the bloodthirsty race that their periodical and violent outbreaks seem to testify : we have seen that such disturbances are the result of the most outrageous abuses finally overstepping the limits of human tolerance. On the contrary, the people of China are happy, laughter-loving children ; natural philosophers untainted by cynicism. A surging mob of infuriated Chinese can be converted into a George

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Robey audience by a happy joke, provided it be broad enough to tickle their sense of the humorous. Rabelais would appeal more to the Far Eastern than the best efforts of *Punch*. The Chinese are ever ready to laugh at anything. They are probably the best humoured nation in the world.

The importance they attach to "face" and the fear of ridicule are the outcome of the lack of independence, of thought and action, of the individual, which is again the result of the prevalence of ancestral worship in China. It follows, then, that the most far-reaching reform that the "New China" can initiate is the abolition of this anti-progressive superstition that masks under the sacred name of religion.

## CHAPTER VII

### ETIQUETTE

THE Chinese have a rigid code of etiquette which is not merely a guide to society manners but is a moving spirit in the national life. Every act, official and personal, is governed by this code; the highest and lowest are controlled by it; their lives are mapped out by it, and so elaborate and all-embracing are its rulings that no circumstances can arise in which a mode of conduct is not laid down for all concerned.

A Government Department—the Board of Rites and Ceremonies—exists to administer the code. Immense importance is attached to the strict observance of etiquette. The code of etiquette and

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ceremonial observances was laid down by Confucius, and has since undergone considerable elaboration. Confucius is the sage of China: the precepts he expounded were committed to paper by his disciples, and are to-day the entire moral teaching and training inculcated into the youth of China in all the schools throughout the land. He taught filial piety, submission to authority, peace, industry, and economy, and all the virtues that are recognised by the highest of religions. Confucianism is a system of philosophy of a very high moral order: it permeates the whole Empire: the upper classes—the *literati*—are followers of Confucius to a man; the lives of all, high and low, are, as we have seen, controlled by the moral precepts and ceremonial observances based on this system of philosophy. The ceremonial observances are rigidly carried out; the moral precepts are still taught and professed, but there, unfortunately for China, matters end;

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no one lives up to the high moral standard set by the sage : the admirers of things Chinese say that in this regard China is no worse than Europe where the precepts of Christianity suffer the same fate as the teachings of Confucius in China.

A code of morality is apt to suffer neglect in proportion to the difficulty men experience in conforming their lives to it. Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism have been alike affected.

Ceremonial etiquette has remained in full force, and is the guiding factor in Chinese life to-day : the high morality is turned to mere hypocrisy : the elaborate code of etiquette will disappear with the old-world China, and give place to the strenuous independence and enterprise of the Westernised China of the immediate future.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAW

OF all the corrupt institutions that affect the long-suffering people of China, the administration of the law is the most flagrant.

The Chinese Penal Code is a model of everything such a code should be. The prevention of crime and the welfare of the people are its avowed objects : were it impartially administered by an upright and competent Bench, no code would be more beneficial to the state in which it was applied. As in most things in China, however, the theory is perfect and the practice faulty. The administration of the law has fallen into such discredit that the people shrink and fear the courts as they might the plague. The conse-

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quences entailed by participation, in any capacity whatever, in litigation can hardly be credited by men who have passed their lives under the enlightened administrations of the West.

In China there is no independent judiciary such as we have in England; in fact there is no judiciary apart from the ordinary administrative executives. The Chih-Hsien (the District Magistrate), the official who administers and is responsible for a district, is the J.P., Stipendiary, County Court and Assizes all in one. All cases, civil and criminal, are tried by him, or by his deputies, in the district Yamen—the Administrator's official residence. In these trials his decision is absolute: appeal by petition to the magistrate's official superiors is merely an appeal from one autocrat to another: the latter is little likely to interfere unless he fears his inaction will bring about such a disturbance or other untoward incident as will bring upon him the invidious notice

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of the high provincial authorities. There is no rigid line drawn between civil and criminal jurisdiction. The magistrate theoretically administers justice to his people with paternal and enlightened benevolence in all cases, of what character soever, that are brought before him. There are no lawyers in China; there is no personal freedom, the principle of Habeas Corpus is totally unknown; there are no juries; the paternal and benevolent power of the magistrate is limited by no checks. The cases that come before the magistrate are either personal or public; the former betake of a civil character and are comparatively rare; private quarrels and disputes are, in the vast majority of cases, settled by arbitration; street fights and assaults are generally brought to a close by the ubiquitous peacemaker, an individual on whom public opinion especially smiles.

It is not the easiest matter in the world to bring a personal case into Court :

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the Court underlings, such as correspond to our policemen and superintendents, marshals and clerks, must be liberally bribed : the other party can, however, by more liberal bribing ensure the case being shelved for ever : it is merely a question which party outbids the other.

Supposing the case actually comes into Court, the first act of the magistrate is to send his Yamen runners (*i.e.* police constables) to arrest and bring to the Court any and every person concerned. Should he elect to deal with the case immediately, the parties are fortunate. The general rule is, that having got the parties into the Yamen, they are incarcerated, plaintiff, defendant, witnesses, and all, until the magistrate's convenience is suited. While in the Yamen prison the comfort of the parties depends entirely on their paying capacity ; they can secure bail by a private arrangement with the runners, but woe betide the latter if they fail to produce their charges at the ap-



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pointed hour. The effect of this is that a rich man can always buy himself out; money becomes an immense power. No poor man dare sue a man of means, for the latter has merely to bail himself, and then bribe the officials to shelve the case indefinitely, the plaintiff meanwhile languishing in confinement. Many trials have been so shelved for years, and the unfortunate parties who were unable to buy themselves bail have spent the same time in prison. We thus can realise the fear litigation stirs up in the Chinese breast. The time for the trial, then, depends on the machinations of the parties to it. When the case comes on the magistrate hears the plaintiff, the witnesses, and the defendant, cutting each and all of them short if he so wishes, interrogating all parties freely, and finally coming to an arbitrary decision, influenced invariably by external considerations such as family prestige, wealth, and, of course, bribes. Such is the consideration private cases receive



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at the courts. Is it any wonder that arbitration has usurped their functions ?

In cases of a public nature the accused, his friends, and his family, and all connected with the affair, are impounded. Here money plays the same part : immunity can, in most cases, be bought. Criminals are, in consequence, chiefly from the poorer classes : cases occur, however, in which wealthy criminals receive their merited punishment, the magistrate fearing to outrage incensed public opinion. Cases of fraudulent bankruptcy, embezzlement, and financial fraud in general—the class of crime with which offenders of substance, rank and position in Christian countries are chiefly connected—are treated rather as civil cases than as matters calling, as in England, for the attention of the public prosecutor : the individual's family, sureties and connections are called upon to remedy his defalcations. It follows that a man of substance is seldom in the dock in China. The magistrate, as a

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rule, is dealing with a man without substance, education, or friends, the latter invariably hastening to disown him. In these circumstances the prisoner stands little chance of an acquittal.

In minor cases the people frequently take the law into their own hands : a thief caught red-handed will be flogged then and there, without the intervention of the officials. In the missionary compounds floggings are administered on occasion by the native servants to thieves caught *in flagrante delicto*. On such occasions the offenders usually signify their consent to these summary proceedings in preference to being sent into the magistrate's Yamen.

“ What's he doing in the dock if he's an innocent man—there must be something in it ? ” This seems to be the official and popular attitude towards the unfortunate accused. There are, as we have said, no lawyers ; there is no public prosecutor ; there are no juries. The

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Court consists of the magistrate, the police officials, the informant, one or two terrified witnesses, and the prisoner.

The author has had exceptional opportunities of becoming acquainted with the procedure of a Chinese court of justice. He has been present during the hearing of many cases, civil and criminal, in native courts : the Hong-Kong extradition cases heard in Canton are especially interesting. These are cases in which the accused has been extradited from the British Colony of Hong-Kong at the request of the Provincial Authorities at Canton. They are of frequent occurrence, as the malefactors of Canton consider Hong-Kong—less than one hundred miles away—a safe refuge and base of operations. Arrested in Hong-Kong, they are tried before the British magistrates and the order for extradition is made on the production of such a *prima facie* case as would warrant a committal for trial in English law. They are then sent up to Canton and tried

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in the magistrate's Yamen, according to the ordinary law of China; an official from the Consulate, however, sits with the magistrate. The application of torture to accused or witnesses is, in these cases, dispensed with, and the prisoner is ensured a fair trial. The crimes charged are, without exception, of the most serious nature, chiefly piracy, murder, and kidnapping, entailing in every case the extreme penalty of the law.

Piracy is rife in the Canton and West Rivers, and the local authorities seem incapable of stamping it out. Vigorous measures have, in the past few years, been taken to put an end, once for all, to a pest that has defied the authorities for ages. When caught the pirates are given short shrift—a nominal trial (except in the extradition cases) or none at all, and the execution-ground.

Kidnapping is a most lucrative business. The children of well-to-do folk are enticed from home and held to ransom: large



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sums are paid for their return. Especially is this the case if the child be an only son. Girls are kidnapped and sold in other parts of the country as slaves or prostitutes. Kidnapping is a capital offence.

The conduct of the trial is instructive : the police officials and the informant are heard by the magistrate before the prisoner is brought in. They give their evidence under a fire of cross-examination from the Bench : the prisoner is then brought in, his identification is established, and he is called upon to confess his guilt : his protestations and explanations are in time cut short by the magistrate, and he is led out.

The magistrate is prosecutor and judge in one ; he does all the cross-examination, and endeavours to elucidate the truth from a mass of confused and contradictory evidence. A delay of a month then ensues to obtain from Peking the Imperial sanction which is a necessary



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preliminary to the execution of a capital sentence.

The sentenced man is decapitated in the presence of the magistrate and the representative from the Consulate, on a small piece of public ground situated in the middle of the Canton city. Considerable crowds collect, and order is maintained by the magistrate's military police. The proceedings are characterised with no little dignity and formality. The actual execution is a matter of a moment. The executioner is remarkably dexterous, and the criminal is stoically composed or seemingly dazed.

No block is used: the man is on his knees, with his hands tied behind his back and his head pressed forward. A hitch seldom occurs.

As the head is struck from the body the crowd emits an indescribable cry, half cheer and half groan, that is more disconcerting to the foreigner than the gruesome spectacle itself. If there are

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two or more prisoners they are tried in a body and, in due course, executed one after the other, the last unfortunate having to watch the proceedings until his own turn has come. But the subject is not a pleasant one, and marks, in all probability an epoch that will soon be forgotten in the progress and advance on which China is embarking.

In the criminal cases which come before a Chinese magistrate there is no reason to suppose that substantial justice is not done. These are cases in which bribery does not enter: the magistrate has no object in deviating from strict justice; he endeavours to apportion the blame and to impose a penalty of a fitting nature. Native witnesses are notoriously unreliable; it may be that the magistrate's attitude of bullying interrogation enables him to arrive at the true facts, when procedure such as our law provides would make confusion worse confounded.

There is no recognised limit—such as we

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have in England—to the penalty that may be inflicted for a stated offence. The accused in China never knows where he is : the confidence begot of a fixed maximum penalty is not his. Everything is in the magistrate's discretion.

New prisons of the most approved modern type are gradually being established in China : still at the time of writing (February 1912) the old style prisons enormously outnumber the new. Everything that could be desired in the prisons of a civilised country is to be found in the newly-built prisons of China : equally, everything undesirable is at home in the old. The prisons attached to the Yamens are indescribably filthy and insanitary : the warders grow fat on their exactions from their charges and their charges' relatives. Food is provided on payment by these same people. A prisoner who has nothing to recommend him generally succumbs, sooner or later, to the neglect, starvation, and

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active cruelty that is his lot. Long periods of imprisonment are seldom meted out to poverty-stricken wretches, who have a short shrift in cases of serious crime, and in minor cases are flogged, or K'Ang-ed. The people who languish in prison are generally there awaiting trial of their cases, civil or criminal, and, as we have seen, some of them wait there years and years.

A Habeas Corpus Act will, no doubt, be one of the first enactments of the belated Constitution. Torture still plays a vast part in the administration of the law in China. Curiously enough, the practice of torture owes its inception to one of the best intentioned and most virtuous regulations of a Penal Code that is itself a model of paternal beneficence and tender solicitude for the welfare of the people. It is laid down that no man can be punished until he has confessed his guilt: the pious idea is that he should embrace his punishment in repentance



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and self-humiliation. The letter of the law had to be strictly complied with and a deadlock was inevitable: the hardened or incipient criminal would scarcely fail to take advantage of this loophole of escape. So matters were adjusted by the institution of the practice of applying forcible and painful persuasion to the convicted person who refused to confess. The implements being at hand it was natural that the scope of torture should be enlarged so as to embrace recalcitrant witnesses, and others to whom the authorities considered that the application of pressure would be beneficial.

Flogging is the chief punishment in Chinese Courts. It is also the main method of torture. The weapon used is a wooden flail of somewhat solid dimensions, the hitting surface of which is flat. This is applied to that part of the anatomy which is situate between the back of the knees and the small of the back. The upper parts of the legs of a man who has



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undergone this treatment are sometimes completely divested of flesh. The severity of this torture is terrible. A confession is without difficulty extorted by this means.

In the extradition cases, to which reference has been made, no torture is applied. A confession of guilt is in these special cases dispensed with.

The breaking of the bones in the hands and feet and other atrocities are rarer, as the flogging is generally sufficient to gain the ends desired. A convicted man who refuses to confess does not gain his freedom : he is kept incarcerated, and torture is applied at intervals until he either gives way or succumbs.

Flogging is, as stated above, the usual punishment for the large range of ordinary offences and crimes.

Capital punishment is carried out in several ways. The most serious method is known as "ling chih," which is reserved for parricides, and for those who commit

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

outrages of an excessively abominable description. In “ling chih” it is the executioner’s duty to apply 1000 cuts to the victim with such skill that life is not extinct until the last cut—the *coup de grâce*, when the knife is plunged into the victim’s heart. This method of execution is rare, being confined to the crimes named: it is, however, still practised in this year of grace 1912 when the occasion arises.

Decapitation is next in order of severity: this is painless and quickly accomplished: it is the usual method of carrying out a capital sentence.

Strangulation comes next. A short rope passed round the condemned’s neck is attached to a short stick, which is then twisted until life is extinct. This is a painful and lingering process, but is considered of less severity than decapitation, for the reason that the victim arrives in the next world with his head and body intact. The precepts of ancestor worship

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make it an irredeemable calamity to leave this world in a state of dismemberment.

The horrible "ling chih" was originally instituted, not as a prolonged torture, but merely as a punishment that would ensure complete dismemberment, and so destroy the felon for ever. That the principles of ancestral worship are firmly believed in to-day is amply proved by the very real preference criminals evince for the painful process of strangulation, rather than the speedy and painless death by decapitation.

There is again another method of strangulation, in which the victim is placed standing in a wooden cage with his head outside; the cage is of such a height that he is suspended by his neck with his feet a foot or so off the ground: under his feet are placed three bricks: the first day he is comparatively comfortable; the withdrawal of a brick on the second day puts his weight more on his neck. He can still reach the remaining

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bricks with his feet, but the strain is terrible. The withdrawal of the last brick leaves him suspended by the neck, and death supervenes. This is a lingering and terrible form of execution; still it is preferred to decapitation.

No doubt a few years will see all these barbarisms matters of the past. Already in some cities—the capital set the example in 1907 when the executions, for the first time, took place within walls—public executions have been abolished. The memory of the atrocities of the past and present will, in a few years, but serve to indicate the immense and rapid progress in civilisation which China will have made.

## CHAPTER IX

### MEDICINE

THERE is no particular in which the boasted civilisation of China fails more than in the important item of medical and surgical knowledge and practice.

Surgery is to all intents and purposes unknown to the Chinese: the practice of medicine in China would be ludicrous if its results were not so deplorable. To commence practice a man needs no qualifications: he merely styles himself a doctor, and puts himself at the disposal of all who will employ him. There is no governing society that insists upon a proper knowledge of drugs and anatomy. There are no hospitals, or schools, where instruction and skill can be obtained.



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The Chinese medical practitioner is wonderfully ignorant of the human anatomy. His patients succumb or survive in spite of the treatment he prescribes for them. His pharmacopœia is full of weird medicines—ground elephants' tusks, tigers' teeth, human and animal secretions, and other equally ridiculous and unpleasant materials.

There are many books on medicine published in China, but they are all full of the most glaring fallacies and idiotic vapourings. The Chinese doctor is not, as a rule, well paid. A grateful convalescent may remember him. The profession is not—as, of course, it could not well be—respected and honoured. The infinite credulity of the Chinese makes him a ready prey for the medical quack, in whose powers, however, he is quick to lose faith. A man changes his doctor without hesitation if he does not speedily experience relief. The unfortunate physician is judged strictly according to

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results. It is quite in the order of things in China to find that it is an especial advantage to a doctor to be the son of a doctor. A family will often remain in the profession for generation after generation. Chemists abound and do a great business in made-up medicines, and in making up doctors' prescriptions. The better-off Chinese, being of a very material mould of mind, are inclined to hypochondria or at least to ready panic at the slightest visitation of ill-health.

Surgery is an unknown art. Thousands of deaths occur weekly which a slight knowledge of surgical practice would easily prevent.

There can be no two opinions on the work of the foreign medical missionaries in China. No praise is too high and no honour too great for this body of men, who are devoting their lives to the medically and surgically neglected millions of China. Their civilising influence has been enormous: their knowledge and skill has

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brought relief and cure to thousands of the yellow race. They have won the esteem and confidence of the natives in all parts of China. They are educating the Chinese and breaking down their stagnating conservatism in a remarkable manner. All over the Empire they have established hospitals where not only are the sick and the crippled attended to, but, more important than all, young Chinamen are being trained laboriously and efficiently in modern surgery and medicine. Numbers of students have been sent to Europe to take their degrees.

A medical university has been established in Peking. Thanks to the ungrudging efforts, tireless energy and self-sacrificing devotion of the medical missionaries, every part of China will soon have its medical practitioner, fully qualified in the surgical and medical knowledge of Europe.

The ignorant and preposterous quacks that have passed in China so long for

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doctors <sup>was</sup> ~~are~~ utterly discredited, and <sup>was</sup> ~~are~~ being rapidly replaced by the Chinese practitioner with European qualifications. How great this change is, and how material to the welfare of the nation, it is unnecessary to dwell on. All honour and praise to the men who are responsible for it.

## CHAPTER X

### RELIGIONS OF CHINA

THE Chinese are, as a race, remarkably tolerant of all religions and systems of metaphysics. The persecution to which Christianity has at times been subjected in China, and the riots and disturbances that have followed in due course, have not originated with the populace, but have been instigated and fathered by the official classes for their own ends. The officials have in the past experienced no difficulty in convincing an ignorant and superstitious proletariat that the sorrows and calamities from which they suffer are due entirely to the foreigner and his missionaries. The spread of popular education and especially the vogue of the



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cheap newspaper has done away for ever with this susceptibility to instigation, and intolerance of the Christian missionaries and converts is a thing of the past. The tolerance displayed by the people is due to their indifference. Few will deny that the Chinese are essentially a race of materialists. It may be, perhaps, that the struggle for existence is, with the vast majority, too absorbing to allow of much thought of the immortality of the soul, or of the life hereafter.

Of the religions that exist in China, the one that has most influence on the lives of the people is ancestral worship. Confucianism, another vast influence in China, can hardly lay claim to the name of a religion: it is rather a system of ethics for the guidance of conduct on this earth; it does not concern itself with a future world.

Buddhism and Taoism are both firmly rooted in China. The Moslem faith has approximately twenty millions of ad-

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herents out of a total population estimated at four hundred millions. Christianity, still in its infancy in China, is, however, making rapid strides and numbers several million converts. The average Chinaman is a rigid observer of ancestral worship, a Buddhist, a Taoist and a Confucianist all in one. A remarkable adaptation and conglomeration of the tenets and precepts of these widely differing systems forms the national religion of China. Ancestor worship must be given first place: it is inextricably interwoven in the national life. It is responsible for nearly every phase of the Chinese civilisation. The family system, which is the basis of all government in China, is directly founded on it. It is responsible for the lowly status of the women of China. Early marriages, concubinage, adoption of children, divorce, and nearly every phase of the social and commercial life of the Chinese are governed by this cult of ancestor worship. It is in a way a

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religion. It, however, offers rather penalties for the wicked than rewards for the pious. The wicked—as defined by this religion—are those who fail in filial piety and in the due observance of the rites of ancestor worship. Fearful calamities are believed to fall to the lot of descendants who fail in this regard. The rigid observer of the cult is supposed to be jealously cared for and assisted by the spirits of his ancestors. It is a mundane doctrine : the rewards and penalties take effect on this life. To this may be ascribed in part the faithfulness with which the cult is practised. Huxley maintained that a system of retributions and rewards operating automatically in this world, would be a far greater force for piety and virtue, than a religion or faith that nullifies its potency by placing the venue of its awards in a quite possible though problematical existence after death.

Ancestor worship does not suffer from this defect. The man who omits the

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worship of his ancestors must look for trouble in the present and future. The ancestral soul, to which worship has been denied, is also unhappy, and it will bend its efforts, so it is believed, to such punishment of the delinquents as will ensure a speedy return to piety. Such is the religion which is universally observed in the vast Empire of China. It does not make essentially for virtuous conduct in the affairs of life—it tends merely to the strengthening of the family to the prejudice of the individual: it establishes the supremacy of the patriarchal system, which has the effect of ensuring good order and peace.

Thanks to the prevalence of this cult, China is free from the problem of the decrease in the birth-rate that besets the nations of the West. The paramount necessity for male offspring that ancestor worship entails, is an effectual obstacle to the inception or spread of Neo-Mathusianism. The happy mean is apparently un-

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attainable. While the nations of Europe are being artificially depopulated, China is suffering from hopeless overcrowding. This is one of the factors that will disturb the peace of the world when China is strong enough to seek outlets for her surplus millions.

Confucianism is the name applied to the teachings, precepts and philosophy of Confucius, the great sage of China. This is an ethical code of the highest morality. Filial piety, brotherly love, peace and economy, virtue and courtesy, the importance of learning, the dignity of labour, and the due submission to law, are among the tenets of this moral system. The sentiments and precepts of our Ten Commandments are embodied in the teachings of Confucius. As will be seen, there is no antagonism between Confucianism and ancestor worship, the latter of which is supplemented by the former. Confucianism offers no rewards in the world to come ; it, in fact, does not deal



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with a life hereafter ; it sets out the principles a man should conform to to become a virtuous and respected citizen : it believes, in effect, that virtue is its own reward. In addition to his moral code, Confucius taught an elaborate system of ceremonial observances, which are considered of the greatest importance in the China of to-day. Unfortunately for China, the ceremonial observances of Confucius have survived where the moral code has suffered neglect, and has degenerated into the merest hypocrisy.

Confucianism has exercised an immense influence in China for over two thousand years, and is as potent to-day as it ever was. Buddhism was introduced, in the first century, from India : at one time it obtained a considerable hold upon the populace. Its tenets were not in conflict with the precepts of ancestral worship, nor was it antagonistic to Confucianism. For many years, however, it has sunk into a hopeless degradation. The rites

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and observances of the Buddhism that China affects, bear little resemblance to the pure and lofty religion promulgated by Buddha. Chinese Buddhist priests are illiterate, immoral, and degraded; they are despised and discredited universally. Their continued existence is due to the tolerance and indifference of the Chinese people.

Taoism is the system of the Chinese philosopher and dreamer, Lao-tzu. "Tao," literally means the "way." Lao-tzu used it in the sense of the "Eternal Good," or "God," from whom all things came, and to whom all things return. The "way" corresponds to the "narrow and stony path" of the Christian teachings. Taoism, originally a lofty and pure religion, has sunk in China to as low a position of degradation as Chinese Buddhism, from which it can to-day hardly be distinguished. The priests of Tao are held in lower estimation, if possible, than the Buddhist priests. These two religions in

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their present degraded form pander to popular ignorance and superstition : magical arts and charlatanism are their chief claims to public attention. The educated Chinaman is an ancestor worshipper, and, *par excellence*, a Confucianist ; he affects to laugh at Buddhism and Taoism, though in times of sickness he will call in the assistance of their priests. To no person in the world is the adage more applicable,

“The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,  
The devil was well, the devil a monk was he,”

than to the Chinaman of the upper classes. The spread of Western medicinal and surgical practice is making itself felt in this matter.

The uneducated Chinaman is at once an observer of ancestral worship, a Buddhist, Taoist, and a Confucianist. In effect, he is a mere materialist, observing certain rites because they have always been observed ; and his superstition is as

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great as his ignorance. The vast majority of the people of China are illiterate. That the Chinaman is intellectually capable cannot be denied; so much so that a decade or so of educational progress will effect a marvellous change in a race which is at present a nonentity in the world.

We now come to a consideration of the progress and influence of Christianity in China.

## CHAPTER XI

### CHRISTIANITY AND THE MISSIONARIES

CHRISTIAN missions arrived in China at a very early date. There is historical evidence that the Nestorian Christians were established in China in the sixth century : they flourished for a time and died out leaving a few traces of their existence, chief of which is the famous Nestorian Tablet, erected in the eighth, and discovered in the seventeenth century. This tablet was brought into prominence a few years ago owing to an attempt on the part of a foreigner to substitute an imitation for it, and to carry off the original. The enterprise failed.

The sixteenth century saw the arrival of the Jesuits, who gained a firm



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footing for the Church of Rome. The first Protestant missionary landed in 1805.

The Church of Rome was distinctly happy in her first missionaries, who were men of erudition and diplomacy. Their astronomical knowledge, and their introduction of the art of casting cannon, brought them into high favour at Court. During the first two reigns of the present Manchu dynasty Christianity flourished exceedingly in China.

The early Catholics, wise in their generation, overcame the fundamental antagonism between Christianity and ancestral worship by tacitly allowing their converts to practise the cult. Their successors were not so wise. Disputes arose, and the matter was referred on the one hand to the Emperor of China, and on the other to the Pope. These two gave opposite decisions, with the result that the Roman Catholic priests, compelled to obey the Pope, fell into disfavour.

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Henceforward Christianity was the bugbear of the official classes.

It strove for the freedom of the individual. It was subversive of the family system upon which the whole fabric of Chinese bureaucracy rests. It set up a higher authority than the Emperor. It made for the progress and enlightenment of the populace, and so constituted a real danger to the corrupt officials. The Roman Catholic—and to a less degree the Protestant — missionaries began to interfere in litigation and disputes in which their converts were concerned. This action on their part was forced on them by the short-sighted officials themselves, who endeavoured to discourage conversion to the new faith by an organised persecution, under the cloak of legal process, of the converts and their families. The missionaries could scarcely remain inactive when their charges were subjected to the grossest outrages.

A massacre of missionaries here and there

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—instigated by the shortsighted bureaucracy—gave the opportunity for the Powers to exact official recognition for the Christian religion. Priests and missionaries ranked thenceforward with “Taotais”—*i.e.* Intendants of Circuits—very high officials. Interference in their converts’ cases could now be made with great effect. Animated by the best intentions and the loftiest motives, the priests seldom abused their power. As long as the administration of the law in China is in the hands of an effete and immoral bureaucracy, so long must the Chinese expect the indignity entailed by the doctrine of extra-territoriality, and the modification of it afforded by the intervention of foreign missionaries on behalf of their converts.

This intervention had, however, a harmful effect on the prestige of the Christian religion. Clever and unscrupulous Chinamen, embracing the faith, made the guileless missionary the tool for the attainment of their wicked purposes.

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When it is borne in mind that the mere acquisition of a knowledge in any way comprehensive of the Chinese language is in itself the work of a lifetime, and that no foreigner has ever understood the natives sufficiently to be able to adjudicate in their wrangles and disputes, small wonder that the too trustful missionary became a ready tool in the hands of the unprincipled Chinaman.

The discredit into which our faith may have fallen amongst the people themselves has been due in no slight degree to this.

When Young China shall have set her house in order, when all ground for outside intervention shall have been removed, the cause of the Christian faith will be freed from an abuse which owes its origin to nothing more iniquitous than a pious desire on the part of the missions to guard their converts from outrage and oppression. Missionaries in China have come in for a great amount of adverse

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criticism ; first we are told that it is a vast presumption for a foreigner to go to a country enjoying a high state of civilisation before the birth of Christ, and endeavour to impose a new creed on its inhabitants.

Of what does the much vaunted civilisation of China consist ? If we are to judge a civilisation by the pious precepts of its founders, by the lofty motives and paternal benevolence of its lawgivers, and by the universal reverence for learning and desire for peace, of its people, China must take a high place in the civilisations past and present of the world. But if we look to the practical side of things, and see a nation foully misgoverned, illiterate, steeped in ignorance and poverty ; the freedom of the individual non-existent ; a universal tolerance of outrages and abuses that is inspired by weakness and terror ; a country where women command no respect and are held in abject subjection ; where cruelty is condoned ; where



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torture still survives ; where executions are still public ; where such a foul barbarity as “ ling chih ”—execution by a thousand cuts—is still practised ; where the administration of the law is discredited, and where official speculation and corruption are commonplaces. Can we say that such a country is civilised ? Has it no need of the enlightening effects of Western civilisation ?

It is not intended here to enter into a discussion on the Christian religion : few, however, will deny that the civilisation of Europe and America is based on Christianity, and that this civilisation is immeasurably superior in its practical results to that which passes as civilisation in China.

Ancestor worship and Confucianism have had centuries of undisputed sway in China, and have failed utterly to enlighten the proletariat. Contact with Western civilisation, based, as we have seen, on the Christian faith, has worked in a few

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decades a wondrous change in the national ideas, culminating in the present revolution with all its promise of radical reform.

The missions have been the pioneers in this vast work. They have established churches, schools, hospitals, and dispensaries: they have taught the freedom and responsibility of the individual; they have made for the advancement of popular education; they have killed base superstitions; they have fought against ancestor worship and all its attendant evils; they have spent their lives in the interests of freedom, enlightenment, self-dependence, and morality: with their hospitals and dispensaries they have won the peoples' affections; the suffering they have relieved is untold: they have driven the thin edge of progress into the appalling stagnation in which China has so long lain. The awakening of China is their reward.

We are told that there are many

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missionaries living in ease, comfort and luxury in China on the money they are able to extract from pious and gullible people at home : again, that the majority of converts are what is known as “ rice ” Christians. There are, of course, bad sheep in every flock, and no doubt some missionaries and some converts are mere seekers after material gain : but we must set against these the thousands of devout men and women who have lived lives of the utmost austerity ; who, giving up the amenities and comforts of civilised life, have devoted their days to the service of the native ; have lived under conditions that would daunt the boldest ; have suffered martyrdom at the hands of a singularly callous race : the terrible atrocities of 1900 are still fresh in our memories : devoted men and women met awful deaths.

The majority of the converts are by no means of the “ rice ” variety. A few, no doubt, embrace the faith for the material

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advantages it offers. But at what cost ? At any rate until recently, at the sacrifice of their friendships, the ostracism of their fellows, and at the risk of their persons. The genuine converts are in the vast majority : thousands of them have suffered martyrdom with their foreign colleagues and fellow-Christians. The conduct of the converts in the “ Boxer ” business showed their true colours. All over the country their loyalty was proved.

There has scarcely been a single genuine popular outbreak against the missionaries in China. The Chinese do not take religion so seriously as to be violently opposed to a new faith. But the people of China are ignorant and superstitious to an incredible degree, and they are—owing chiefly to maladministration and official corruption—chronically poverty-stricken and in great distress. When matters come to a head, and starvation grips them, they become desperate and rise against their rulers, who are then



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obliged to disgorge their illegal profits, to distribute rice, and to take similar steps to assuage the popular wrath.

The arrival of the foreigner and his missionaries was by way of being a god-send to the officials. The very work of the missionary tending, as it avowedly did, to the enlightenment of the people, could not fail to arouse the hatred of the bureaucracy. By diverting the temporary ebullition of the fury of the populace to the missionary they at once saved their own skins and pockets, and dealt a blow at their hated enemy. The people were ready to believe any lies : one that always served to rouse popular fury to a fever pitch, alleged that the missionaries kidnapped children to obtain from their eyes the ingredients of their medicines. The rage of the ancestor-worshipping, child-loving Chinaman would be perfectly uncontrollable on hearing and crediting this story : he was aware that unwanted children were saved from

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death and starvation by the missionaries, and taken into their houses : the story explained to him the motives that actuated the mission's action. The massacre of the Roman Catholic nuns at Tientsin in 1870 was caused by a widespread belief—instigated by officials who were intelligent enough to know the truth—in the accuracy of this story.

The proletariat of China is not, and never has been, anti-foreign : its remarkable susceptibility, born of ignorance, to suggestion and instigation has led it into many crimes and outrages. Whenever non-molestation of the foreigner has been found to be imperatively necessary in the interests of those in authority, no difficulty has been experienced in controlling the populace. The present uprising is a case in point. The interests of the foreigner have been scrupulously safeguarded by both parties to the civil war that is just over.

The system of diverting the hatred of

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the populace from the officials to the foreigner has had a long innings, but its day is now past. The officials are reaping at last the reward of their corruption, their systematic speculation, and their maladministration. The people are at last aware of the advantages that accrue to them from intercourse with foreign nations.

There can be no doubt that the Boxer upheaval was originally anti-dynastic and anti-bureaucratic: it was cleverly diverted by the Empress Dowager against the foreigner. Foreign intervention then occurred, and the rebellion was rapidly stamped out. The Court fled, but was reinstated. That was the last time an organised rebellion in China will allow itself to be diverted from its true course.

The last ten years have seen remarkable progress in the advance of education. We see the result in the present demand for a Constitution modelled on such a

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limited Monarchy as we have in England, or on the wider scope of American Republicanism.

The brunt of the early riots that culminated in 1900 in the Boxer outbreak has ever been borne by the missionaries. The missions, medical and educational, were the pioneers in China of Western progress and Christian civilisation. To them China owes a debt that can never be repaid. In the new and reformed China that looms so large to-day, no one can doubt that Christianity will play a part commensurate with the extent of her influence in the great nations of the West.

## CHAPTER XII

### ETIQUETTE AND SOCIAL OBSERVANCES

THE Chinese are probably the most ceremonious race in the world. The Frenchman or the Italian excites the good-humoured derision of the stay-at-home Briton: the Chinaman is more than ridiculous; he is frankly absurd. He attaches an extravagant importance to the due observation of an elaborate code of etiquette, for which the go-ahead people of the West have neither the time nor the inclination. His daily conduct is regulated by this code, and he has a great and genuine contempt for all who, from ignorance or disinclination, do not conform to it.

The contempt for the foreigner that is



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characteristic of the heathen Chinese is in no small way connected with our—to him—incredible ignorance and disregard of the conventions of social intercourse. The Chinaman, devoid of independence and self-reliance, intellectually warped and physically inferior, yellow and unwashed, is only just—after a long series of unprecedented humiliations—waking up to the fact that the foreigner is not of an inferior race that has everything to learn and nothing to impart. The Chinaman has everything to learn, and the task is the more difficult because he has so much to forget before he can commence to progress. He is bound up in national and personal conceit. Conceit is the most prominent characteristic of the *literati*—the upper and official class of China: conceit totally unjustified and absolutely hidebound: a conceit that the most abject humiliations appear powerless to shake.



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The presumption and conceit of the Chinese bureaucracy is equalled only by their incompetence and corruption. Small wonder that the foreigners in China sympathise with the people in their efforts to free themselves from the crass stupidity and foul misgovernment of the *literati*.

But to return. The Chinaman of all classes is essentially unwashed, and in this differs from the Japanese. Cleanliness is not a lost art in China; it is an art that has never been discovered. He washes his summer clothes occasionally, his person once in a blue moon. The wadded garments that he affects in winter beggar description. His bedclothes and his beds, his houses and his hotels, pass all understanding. And this is true of all classes—high and low. The lower classes of all countries have less opportunity and inclination for cultivating personal hygiene. The submerged thousands of London may possibly be—

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though the author doubts it—as unpleasantly neglectful of their persons as their fellow-unfortunates in Peking. But the classes of England, as opposed to the masses, are infinitely cleaner in their persons and habits than the corresponding classes of China. The foreign-educated Chinese student is the first to observe this. A returning student once complained to the author on board a China coast steamer that he had been put into the same cabin as an official of his own nationality. The student's description of his cabin companion's antics and habits was as laughable as his chagrin was genuine.

The Chinese gentleman always affects long nails. It is an indication that he is a man of position. A manual labourer is obviously precluded from growing his nails three inches or so long. These long nails—their very length ensures a larger area for the accumulation of foreign matter—are peculiarly disgusting to the

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Westerner. Fortunately, a Chinaman never shakes hands. When he meets a person he shakes his own hand, not the other man's. A merciful dispensation that is outraged by the half-modern Chinaman—the man who has advanced towards Western ideas far enough to insist upon shaking one's hand, but who has not abandoned the time-honoured cult of the long finger-nail.

The Chinaman, again—and we are again grateful—receives his guests in his hat. The uncovered head is a sort of undress. To appear without one's hat is as unpardonable as it is in England to appear in shirt-sleeves. The foreigner is willing to conform to this convention. When a Chinese official pays a call at the Consulate, or drops in for a friendly chatter, his hosts solemnly don tall hats. Though this is a trifle uncomfortable—has the reader ever munched cake with a silk hat on?—we satisfy thus the Chinese craze for the proper, for the *comme il faut*.

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The questions a Chinese poses, as a matter of abstract politeness, to an absolute stranger, are a little disconcerting. One is first asked point-blank one's age. Old age is revered and respected in China, and so the higher the age one can claim, the more favourable the impression one makes. It must be mentioned in this regard that ladies do not go out in Chinese society. Having satisfied your interrogator's remarkable interest in your age, you must not fail to return the inquiry. If a man is young he will reply, in effect, that he is still a young fool, not having yet attained such and such an age: if he is old he will say he has wasted sixty or so years. Mock modesty is a characteristic of Chinese social intercourse. A Chinaman will inquire of what noble country you are. You return the question, and he will say his lowly province is so-and-so. He will invite you to do him the honour of directing your jewelled feet to his degraded



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house. To be "in it" you must reply that you, a discredited worm, will crawl into his magnificent palace. Family inquiries—provided the wife is religiously omitted—are highly polite. The price of one's clothing is well within the range of polite small talk.

The Chinese are a most hospitable race. As we have seen, they pass their lives in the full glare of publicity. They are sociable, and they are great diners-out. The host generally gives his dinner at a restaurant, seldom at his own home. China is the land of restaurants. The invitation gives two hours' grace. It is a question of the divisions of time in China where the day is divided into periods of two hours each. Say the invitation mentions the period—four to six; one then turns up about six. The East is not particular with regard to time. An hour here and an hour there is immaterial. It is this disregard of time which constitutes one of the greatest differences

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between the East and the West. The meal itself lasts several hours. It consists of the weirdest dishes. One unconsciously devours the meat of animals and other creatures that are not considered edible in Western lands. Contrary to the belief that obtains in England, dog flesh is not a staple article of diet in China. It is eaten in some parts of the Empire by the poorer people, but not in large quantities. It no doubt finds its way under false pretences on to many tables in much the same manner that horseflesh in England often usurps the place of beef. Pork is the meat of China; everybody eats it in some form or another. Pig breeding and fattening is a great industry; the scavenger pig is a familiar sight all over the country. His flesh is eaten, however, by the poorer classes only. The pig eaten by the middle and upper classes of China—and the pig that is now finding its way into the English market—is a grain-fed animal; he is reared, fed, and

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killed under conditions that compare very favourably—to say the least of it—with those that obtain in Western lands. The prejudice against Chinese pork is based on the ignorant reports of people who have only a superficial knowledge of China; globe-trotters who see the scavenger pig and jump to the conclusion that the pork exported to England is thus derived. Others have argued that the Chinese are too poor to allow of grain being fed to the pigs. They overlook the fact that pig-farming is a paying commercial enterprise, in which much capital is invested.

The modern Chinaman is taking more and more—especially in the Treaty Ports—to the foreign dietary and noticeably to the liquid part of the programme. Knives and forks are beginning—only beginning—to replace chop sticks amongst the upper classes. But the chop stick, in size and shape differing little from the ordinary English pencil, is still supreme.

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Two are used, and great dexterity is soon attained in their manipulation. Meat on a Chinese table is always well cut up : it is generally rolled into balls, and thus prepared presents no difficulty to the chop stick.

The tediousness of a Chinese banquet is relieved by one or two disconcerting incidents. The tyro would be well advised to keep on eating : any cessation on his part may lead—in fact, this may and generally does happen to him anyhow—to his host or neighbour making with dexterous—if a trifle soiled—fingers, a bolus composed of meat and vegetable and putting the result into the visitor's mouth. This is a mark of polite attention, to which there can be no refusal. The martyr gulps it down and trusts his digestion will rise to the situation. The well-mannered guest will seek an opportunity of returning the compliment. The Chinaman does nothing quietly—certainly not at meals. He eats loudly, drinks loudly,

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and any other noises that are evidences of repletion go not merely unchecked, but are, as a matter of politeness and appreciation, given full play and encouragement. They are frequently supplemented by artificial simulation and exaggeration.

A Chinaman's women-folk are not in evidence at social or any other functions. But since mankind craves feminine society to inspire and cheer, their place is taken by singing girls, who are a feature of all banquets. These girls are educated—they are the only women in China who receive any education—to enable them to converse with, amuse, and entertain the—in China—predominant and nobler sex. They are intelligent and up-to-date, good-looking, witty, and impertinent: in fact, admirably calculated to appeal to the male; withal they are not necessarily prostitutes. A successful singing girl makes a very good living out of it.

The popularity of the theatre in China



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is universal. Every town has its several theatres : large restaurants have a theatre in their midst. The actor's calling is, however, the lowest a man can turn his hand to : acting is looked upon as a morally degrading profession. No doubt in time public opinion with regard to the stage will evolve—as it has done in England—until the actor will receive the recognition he is accorded in Western countries, where the stage ranks with the highest institutions in the land. There are no actresses in China ; female parts are taken by men. There is no stage management, such as we know it. The sense of illusion to which so much importance is attached in Europe is discounted. The Chinese stage must be not unlike the English stage of Shakespeare's day. The actor walks on and off, "makes up" in public, and joins the audience if so inclined when he is not actually on the tapis. Access to the stage is not denied to any curious patron.



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Action and acting are particularly conventional and stiff. The text—though little can be heard of it in the din—appears to be the important matter. There is an orchestra which emits a terrible noise and uproar. The whole proceedings at a theatre are characterised by noise. The audience engages in voluble conversation, and as a Chinaman never converses save at the top of his voice, a house with a thousand or so patrons is—with the assistance of the weird ear-splitting pipes and clashing cymbals of the orchestra—a regular pandemonium.

A play lasts for several days on end. One merely takes a pinch at it, so to speak; no one ever sits it out. The plot is so disjointed that one loses nothing by being a day or so late. To the uninitiated comprehension is impossible. Most of the pieces are, however, classics and the simple story that runs through the drawn-out confusion is generally known.

Every restaurant has its orchestra.

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Here, as everywhere else, everybody shouts at the top of his voice. Noise is in fact a characteristic of this remarkable race.

Shanghai has two or three native theatres built on modern lines, where modern plays, both original and adaptations of foreign classics, are produced. A Chinese Amateur Dramatic Association exists there, and is responsible for productions of high artistic merit. The Chinaman is going ahead in the foreign settlements of China; his influence is being felt, and his influence is always for progress.

The Chinaman has no idea of comfort as we understand it. He lies on a hard bed, and he sits on hard wooden chairs with straight backs. The stone bed has its advantages: it is really an oven. A fire is lit in it in winter and the sleeper is easily and agreeably kept warm. The rich Chinese in the foreign settlements are growing more and more to appreciate

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the comforts and luxuries of life. Arm-chairs, wire matted beds, the conveniences of the Western bathroom, and the hundred-and-one other amenities of civilised life, are rapidly becoming popular. In Shanghai, where the International Municipality has laid down first-class roads, the rich Chinese have been caught by the motor craze. They all have their own cars, and loll at ease on soft cushions where their forefathers jolted, and their less advanced contemporaries still jolt, in springless carts.

The contrast between Western progress and Eastern backwardness is nowhere more emphasised than at Shanghai. Here we have a go-ahead foreign community with all the advantages and institutions such as are the pride of the most up-to-date towns of Europe and America. Shanghai is called the Model Settlement, and richly deserves the appellation. The influence on the Chinese of the example in their midst of the foreign settlement of Shang-

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hai, a self-administering town of the most progressive order, has been incalculable. Rich Chinese, both merchants and private citizens, have been quick to appreciate the advantages of a town where the law is impartially administered, where person and property are equally respected, where the taxes are applied to the advantage of the town and are not swallowed up by rapacious officials, and where commercial enterprise is unhampered by official exactions and interference.

The Chinese, as a people, are not slow to take advantage of the superiorities of the Western civilisation. In no case is this more apparent than in the methods of locomotion; the railway train, the steamer, the motor, the tram, and the bicycle, have all attained an immediate and immense popularity. There is no distrust of the new-fangled applications.

The advantages of electricity were at once recognised. The Chinaman is not a



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hidebound conservative; he is just the opposite. He is ready to embrace the most far-reaching reforms. It has been the official class that has—for obvious reasons—so strongly opposed all reform. But reform has come, as it must inevitably come when a nation of astute men has the advantages of progress and civilisation demonstrated before its very eyes.

Accidents and contretemps have occurred, as it was inevitable, in the contact of West and East at Shanghai. The introduction of fast traffic in Shanghai streets was too great a change to be unmarked by incidents. The necessity for pedestrians keeping to the side-walk—in old China one always walks in the middle of the road—was not realised until, despite the utmost care and attention on the part of the police authorities, some distressing accidents occurred. The Chinese took some time to understand the danger of alighting from a moving tram. They



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saw the foreigner step off when the tram was in motion, and they followed suit, often stepping off with their backs to the direction of motion. Several deaths occurred from this cause.

Electricity also took its toll. But the inhabitants were not moved to wrath or distrust. They recognised that their ignorance and temerity were to blame; and they have now learned to make safe use of the much appreciated advantages that Western civilisation affords.

The Chinese have not taken so kindly to the vigorous methods of sanitation to which we attach so much importance. The Health Office of the Shanghai Municipal Council is nothing if it is not thorough, and the result is the remarkable absence of epidemic and endemic disease. But it is this branch of foreign activity that has met with the greatest misunderstanding and with some opposition. The mere negative

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work of prevention does not appeal to the Chinaman. Totally indifferent to hygiene, personal or communal, he is apt to take exception to the vigorous measures adopted in the interest of the public health by the Health Office. The demolition of insanitary houses, the inspection of meat, milk, and other produce intended for the Shanghai market, the insistence on speedy burial of deceased persons, and the many other avenues of the activity of the sanitary authorities, bring them into continual conflict with the native residents.

A funeral in China is a ceremony of the first importance: the deceased must not be buried until a lucky day be revealed. Bodies encased in wooden coffins are in consequence frequently kept in the house for a year or so, pending the discovery of a lucky date for the interment.

The Chinese residents of the Model Settlement were quickly given to under-

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stand that in the interests of the health of the community, this practice could not be tolerated. In the face of the determined stand of the sanitary authorities, the Chinese at first removed the bodies of deceased relatives beyond settlement limits, there to await the day of interment. Latterly they have fallen in with foreign ideas on the question of the burial of the dead.

In the plague outbreak in North China of last year, cremation was for the first time adopted in China. Such a ready abandonment of the fundamental principles of that ancestral worship which has been the animating spirit of Chinese life for centuries, augurs well for the future. It shows more and more that obstructive conservatism is far from being a national characteristic. It is merely the policy of the ruling caste. The people have no sympathy with it: popular education is freeing them from the shackles of superstition. When practice and example have

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shown a reform to be advantageous, they are ready to adopt it, however antagonistic it may be to preconceived ideas and established ceremonial rites.

The social revolution of China will be a rapid one. The few years that sufficed for Japan to change from a medieval state to a modern Power will also suffice for China. The explanation for this seeming miracle is that the people are in heart materialists, and are ever ready to adopt reforms when their advantages are brought home to them.

The plague-prevention measures instituted by the Municipal Council of Shanghai in the autumn of 1910 led to further friction, culminating in serious rioting. The necessity for the procedure adopted was finally brought home to the people and their co-operation obtained. A proper understanding of the foreigners' motives and ideas has always resulted in popular approval and active assistance.



## CHAPTER XIII

### OPIUM

THE opium question in China has been the cause of the bitterest controversies and animosities. Missionaries and moralists have vehemently denounced the heinousness of the Indian and Home Governments in forcing—so it is alleged—the opium trade on an unwilling China. But there was no forcing — no compulsion. The Chinese of those days wanted opium, just as the Irish or Scotch want whisky, or the English and Germans want beer. There was a market for it, and commercial enterprise fulfilled the demand.

The causes which led to what is known as the “Opium War” of 1840 are much misunderstood in England. The name



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by which the war is known is unfortunate to a degree. This war was not undertaken with the object of forcing the obnoxious drug on to the Chinese market. It was rather a war of reprisal for the long series of outrages and indignities in which the High Commissioner, Lin, had thought fit to indulge at the expense of our country and our countrymen.

Lin's seizure of the opium was not actuated by a moral desire to rid his country of a terrible curse : that it was opium at all was an accident. If piece goods had been the staple foreign import into Canton, there can be no doubt that they would have formed the subject-matter of the dispute.

The result of the war led to the establishment of more suitable relations between this country and China, and to the recognition of commercial intercourse between the two countries. The war was undertaken by this country in the interests, primarily, of our prestige and, secondly,

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of our commerce. Opium smoking was not a new thing in China. There already existed an import from Java. The Mohammedans of Yunnanfu also imported it. The poppy was grown in many parts of China.

The introduction of the Indian drug was followed by an effort on the part of the Chinese to capture the market for the native-grown article, to which a great impetus was given. The foreign drug, however, held its own by reason of its superiority. It is not denied that many pious edicts were issued from time to time, denouncing the vice ; but that any genuine attempt—apart from the promulgation of pious sentiments—was made must be denied.

The revenue derived from opium was, like the revenue derived from the gambling dens, too great a temptation for the grasping bureaucracy. In addition, the official classes were more or less addicted to the habit. No measures were taken

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to restrain or restrict the cultivation of the poppy all over the country. Thousands, nay, millions of acres, were turned over to poppy cultivation without comment or intervention on the part of the authorities, who could without difficulty have checked the spread of the vice in this direction.

The anti-opium moralists endeavour to establish the repugnance in which the opium trade is held by the Celestial Government by quoting passages from many pious edicts. But it should be borne in mind that China is the land of hypocrisy : that the loftiest sentiments and highest morality go hand in hand with the vilest corruption and the lowest degradation.

The Government has likewise fulminated against the gambling hells of China, with which foreigners are not concerned : yet official licences have been issued in increasing numbers year after year. If the Chinese Government had been genuine

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in their desire to suppress opium dens and gambling hells, they would have succeeded without difficulty. The truth is the officials have never desired the abolition of these two sources of revenue. The anti-opium and the anti-gambling crusade has originated with the people themselves, and is another result of that spread of popular education and enlightenment on which so much stress has been laid in this book. The movement is from below. It has made rapid progress, and the officials have been forced to take it up.

As long as China allowed large areas of her country to be devoted to the cultivation of the poppy, so long did H.M. Government oppose all restrictions aimed at the imported Indian drug. At the first sign of a genuine desire to curtail the opium trade, the British Government—at a great sacrifice of revenue—demonstrated its ready willingness to co-operate. An arrangement was entered into providing for the parallel and pro-



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portional restriction of the growth of the native drug and the import of the foreign article. Thanks to the influence of the progressive Chinese themselves, and to the action of our Government, opium smoking in China is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

Too much attention cannot be drawn to the fact that the Chinese are reforming themselves. Official China is being forced from below. There can be no question that the habit of smoking opium is injurious; very injurious when practised by the badly fed coolie class, and less harmful when affected by the well-to-do classes. There are many moderate indulgers in China, to whom the habit is no more harmful than is a moderate addiction to tobacco or spirits to an Englishman. But there are hundreds of thousands to whom the vice is a terrible curse. It is undeniably a national scourge. The vitality of the nation was rapidly becoming sapped by it: the anti-opium

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crusade has not come a moment too soon. The curse of excessive indulgence in alcohol which afflicts the nations of the West, is not to be compared with the vice that has made such ravages in China.

Opium smoking is nearly a thing of the past. Well would it be for China if nothing took its place. The first result of the campaign against opium was the introduction of morphia and morphine. Slaves of the opium habit, unable to procure the drug freely, took with alacrity to morphine injections. A large traffic in morphia and the appliances for injecting it grew, until it was made illegal, and with the active assistance of the foreign governments was quickly stamped out. Morphia can now be procured in China only under the same restrictions that obtain in this country.

The crushing of the opium habit has given an enormous stimulus to the trade in foreign wines and spirits and tobacco. It would seem that the Chinese mean to

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substitute whisky for opium. It is a change considerably for the better. The pessimists who consider that the work of the anti-opium crusade is nullified by the great increase in the consumption of spirits all over the country are in error. Intoxicating beverages have been known in China for centuries, yet a drunken Chinaman is rarely seen. The Chinese are as a race extremely temperate. It is to this that must be ascribed the manner in which the race has weathered the opium storm. It is reasonable to suppose that they will be as temperate in their consumption of alcohol as they were of opium. As an excess of alcohol is considerably less harmful than excess of the drug, it follows that the substitution of spirits is all for the good of the race. It goes, of course, without saying that a race would be better free from both spirits and drugs; but putting that aside as a Utopian dream, it is a matter for congratulation that it should be addicted

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to the lesser rather than to the greater evil.

The Chinaman of the upper classes is a great lover of good living. He has become extremely fond of foreign wines and spirits. Grapes grow well in certain parts of China, and a successful attempt has been made to produce locally the champagnes, clarets, hocks, and other wines that are at present imported. Large vineyards have been laid out on the hills of Chefoo on the northern seaboard of Shantung. The concern is due to the enterprise of a rich Singapore Chinaman, and is managed by an Austrian expert, Baron von Babo. The wines produced are said to be of a remarkably high standard. Though fifteen years have elapsed since the inception, no wines have as yet been placed on the market.

There can be no doubt that the immediate future will see an enormous increase in the consumption of wines and spirits in China. The tobacco trade of China is going up by leaps and bounds. Cigarette

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factories have been established at Shanghai and other places. The cigarette is already enormously popular amongst all classes. Produced to sell at an incredibly low figure, it is consumed by even the poorest in the land.

Tobacco and alcohol are rapidly taking the place that opium has held for several decades.

The passing of opium is a sign of the progress of the Chinese.



## CHAPTER XIV

### HONESTY—COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE

THE personal honesty of the Chinese is a question on which expert opinion is divided. That the officials are dishonest and corrupt, there can be no gainsaying. It is again unanimously admitted that the commercial morality of China compares favourably with that of any country in the world. Honesty in the abstract is probably non-existent in China; but so many are the checks to dishonesty that honesty becomes the best policy, and is consequently the rule.

Commercial honesty is secured by the many guilds, to one or other of which every merchant and trader belongs. The honesty of the people is in fact the direct

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outcome of the corruption of their officials. The traders know there is no justice to be obtained in the courts, and so they take measures to defend themselves by forming themselves into unions or, as they term them, guilds. The guilds ensure the absolute commercial uprightness for which the Chinese merchant is famous. There is, again, a system of sureties to which recourse is had on occasions of all kinds ; *e.g.* on the signing of a contract, on the purchase of goods, on the engagement of an employee.

The family system is a still further check to fraud. Not only is it impossible for a man to convey property into his wife's name, but, in addition, his family is actually held responsible for his defalcations.

The final appeal in China is always to public opinion : in England to the mere letter of the law. Honesty is the best policy for all in China. In England, honesty is the best policy—for dull people

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only. The astute financier and company promoter, whose cleverness in skirting the law has enabled him to amass a fortune, is by no means a rarity in England: he could not exist in China.

The Chinaman's honesty is not secured by moral so much as by materialistic considerations. There is not in China that abstract sense of morality that, despite the cynics, controls and dictates the actions of the vast majority of our countrymen. If it is to the real advantage—which, as we have seen above, it seldom is—of a Chinaman to cheat you, you may be sure that he will not refrain on grounds of abstract morality.

A vast system of recognised perquisites often misleads the Westerner into a wholesale denunciation of the honesty of the race. There can be little doubt that in practice the Chinese compare favourably in the matter of honesty with any nation in the world.

## CHAPTER XV

### GAMBLING

THE Chinese are gamblers one and all : the whole nation is obsessed by the spirit of chance. They bet and wager over anything. Games of chance are innumerable, lotteries abound, and gambling dens exist in nearly every street.

The authorities draw an enormous revenue from this national vice. The lotteries are immensely popular, and are run on strictly "straight" lines ; though there are, of course, a host of impostors selling bogus lottery tickets. The gambling dens are licensed by the authorities ; the chief game played in them is called "fangtan." This is a square tablet lying flat on the table. The operator takes a

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handful of flat counters and puts them on the table, covering them with a brass saucer to conceal their numbers. The patrons then put their money at the corners or at the sides of this square. The saucer is then removed and the counters divided off into fours: the remainder, which is of course either 0, 1, 2 or 3, after this division determines the winnings, the sides of the square corresponding to 0, 1, 2 and 3: money placed at the corners covers the two sides that form that corner. The sides pay three to one and the corners evens, less ten per cent. commission on all winnings. The game is simple and has an immense vogue. The author has played it to a considerable extent. The Chinese have systems for this game that they assure one are infallible, just as Europeans have systems for roulette. There are many other games of chance, but "fangtan" is the chief.

A great anti-gambling movement is at

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work amongst the people. The closing of the dens and the punishment of street betting are the objects of this campaign. As in the case of opium, this movement is the result of the general desire of a large portion of the people themselves to rid their country from a scourge scarcely less terrible than the opium vice. These reformers are no longer satisfied with pious edicts. They have determined on a practical suppression of the licensed houses. It is here more than anywhere that the reformers and the officials have come into conflict. The officials maintain that the revenue derived from the licences cannot be dispensed with ; the reformers retort that if the country were properly governed there would be no necessity for obtaining revenue from immoral sources. It is obvious that the reformers must win in the end ; the people are with them more and more as they are educated to a proper understanding of affairs.

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It is as impossible to eradicate the gambling habit in China as it is in England, but the evil can be controlled and minimised by judicious legislation.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BEGGARS

IN this country of the topsy-turvy, where white is mourning ; where women wear trousers and men skirts ; where the language is written vertically and from right to left, instead of horizontally and from left to right ; where rowers stand instead of sit ; where, in fact, nearly all European ideas are reversed, it is not to be wondered at that the beggars should be rich.

China is the land of guilds, societies, and trade unions : even the beggars and thieves have their societies. One beggar can be a horrible nuisance ; a trade union of them is possessed of so much power for annoyance that it can command large sums of prevention money. All shops

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and private houses are compelled to buy exemption from the visitations of mendicants. The annual toll having been collected, the beggars' union sees to it that the shopkeeper or householder is free from molestation. If the shopkeeper refuses to pay or disputes the amount demanded, his shop is bombarded by crowds of foul and disgusting specimens of humanity, whose presence effectually keeps custom away. Resort to the authorities is of no avail: the officials have no wish to stir up the animosity of the whole body of mendicants, from whose associations they derive considerable revenue. It is generally good policy to pay up the sum demanded.

The Chinese beggar is, as will be gathered, an institution; he swarms in every town of China; his stock-in-trade consists of some horrible deformity or foul mutilation, often self-inflicted: by virtue of his unions he manages to secure a good and easy living.

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The thieves of China are also trade unionists. The feeble-minded Westerner might expect a watchman to be a man of youth and vigour: in China he is invariably a decrepit old man. The job is a sinecure, a sort of old-age pension. The European expects the detective or watchman to go his rounds silently: the Chinese watchman beats a wooden gong, with a view to drawing attention to his presence, for all the world as if he were a muffin seller. The explanation is that a thief will not despoil a house that has bought immunity by employing one of his number.

China is not a pleasant place for the globe-trotter—I do not mean the China of the Treaty Ports, but the real China, the medieval China that is just waking up to civilisation and modernity. The streets are narrow and evil smelling, littered with garbage and refuse, and foul with scrofulous mendicants and disease-ridden unfortunates. Contrary to the

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general impression, the buildings are not romantically picturesque : when new they are offensively gorgeous ; they soon, however, become dirtily dilapidated and prominently insanitary.

Deafening noise and overpowering stench are the characteristics that obtrude most on the tourist's attention ; noise and stench, poverty and disease, squalor and dirt—dirt everywhere—these are the things that the globe-trotter must expect to find, though he can hardly be said to find them ; it would be more accurate to say that they rise up and hit him in the eye.

The beautiful and romantic China, depicted by some authors, has no existence outside the perfervid imagination of obstinate idealists. The real China, with its all-pervading dirt, is perhaps the least romantic country in the world. The rich Chinaman is dirty in his person and habits ; the Chinese woman is as ugly as she is dull : one never sees in China the beautiful

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children that are such a delight in Western countries ; chubby children there are, but they are drab and dirty : romance cannot exist in the sordid squalor and hard materialism of China.

The gorgeous East evidently does not embrace China, the land of the drab and of the uniform. Uniformity reigns supreme and uniformity is deadly dull.

It is not mere ignorance and unfamiliarity with the country that inspires the remark —“ All Chinamen are alike ” ; though, of course, they are easily distinguishable one from the other, yet they have so much in common that the above observation has some foundation of excuse. All Chinese men and women, without exception, have black hair, until old age turns it to grey. All Chinese have black, almond-shaped eyes, high cheek bones, and yellow complexions. All Chinamen under forty are clean-shaven ; over forty they grow what hair they can and want to. Hair grows so scantily on the Far Eastern face that

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a full moustache, or beard, is never seen.

Blue—always the same blue—is the colour of the clothing of the immense majority of the people, so much so that China is often called the land of the blue gown. Uniformity is again evinced in the architecture of Chinese houses, temples, and pagodas.

China, as we have seen all along, does not in any way encourage individuality ; the result is a drab uniformity that grows intensely painful to the man from the West.



## CHAPTER XVII

### LANGUAGE

THE Chinese language is the most horrible that any sane man can be called upon to acquire. "Sane" is said advisedly, for the general opinion amongst foreigners resident in China is that no Westerner who has anything like a deep knowledge of Chinese, is entirely sane. To call a man a sinologue is a very severe reflection on his intelligence and abilities. The time taken to acquire such a knowledge, and the all-absorbing interest that is waiting for the unwary, give some justification for this opinion.

The student interpreter sent out to Peking by H.M. Government, with a view to acquiring a knowledge of the language,

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is apt to laugh when older men solemnly warn him against the insidiousness of the study on which he is embarking. There can be little doubt that when once a man has got keen on the language he counts no more as a practical man of affairs. The sinologue is rightly looked upon as mad until he proves his sanity.

The two services in China are the Consular Service and the Chinese Customs Service ; the members of both are compelled to possess a considerable acquaintance with the Chinese language, and they come in, in consequence, for a certain amount of distrust at the hands of the merchant princes and the embryonic merchant princes. It is fortunate for all concerned that the majority of Consular and Customs men have sternly—the uncharitable say lazily—denied themselves the delights of deep erudition. For the few wild visionaries and warped intellectuals burning with a fierce desire to expound the beauties of the Tao Te Ching to a

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callous and unsympathetic world, there are many who have a right perspective of the importance of the language in their official cosmos.

The Chinese language has no syntax as we know it. A word is on occasion a noun, an adjective, an adverb, or a verb, active or passive; the position of the word in the sentence and the general context are the only indications of its nature and significance. In addition to this, there is a system of tones, four in the official language, and five or six in some dialects. The effect of the tones is to multiply the scope of the words.

To an average ear the tones, once mastered, present no difficulties, either of recognition or of use.

The importance of the tones may be illustrated by the character which is romanised "mai"; in the second tone this means to sell; in the third tone, to buy. The natives use the tones quite unconsciously: the foreigner is hopelessly

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at sea until he has a complete mastery of them. Another difficulty is a sense of the tense : here, again, there is no guiding syntax. "Lai la" may mean "he has come" or "he is coming." These are simple illustrations of the difficulties of the colloquial language. The written, or literary Chinese is still more intricate, elaborate, and difficult of comprehension. Classical Chinese is confusion worse confounded ; violent controversies still take place over the meaning of the texts of the classics. It is in this field that the foreign sinologue exhausts his intellect and energies.

The Chinese themselves learn their language by committing many books to memory ; there is a regular course of books that are learnt from cover to cover in all the schools of the Empire. To learn the characters and phrases, each scholar sings it out at the top of his voice ; by sheer dint of loud repetition, he at last gets it pat. As a schoolroom holds from



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twenty to a hundred pupils, and as each is shouting his part quite independently of the others, it can be imagined that the schools contribute in no small degree to the volume of noise that characterises China.

It is to this method—the only method—of acquiring knowledge of their language, that must be ascribed the marvellous powers of memory possessed by the Chinese. A Chinese student will come to England with a negligible smattering of our language, and in three years he will be called to the Bar. He commits to memory vast amounts of—to him—unintelligible material, and passes examinations conducted in a language that is, in many cases, mere gibberish to him.

The old-fashioned Chinese school is already a thing of the past. The last few years have seen the establishment in all parts of China of Government schools, where a modern European curriculum replaces the monopoly that Chinese classics

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have held in the past; the classics are still taught, but now occupy much the same position that Latin holds in our own secondary educational establishments. The study of English receives prominent attention in these new schools. The Chinese language must go the way of all cumbrous and out-of-date institutions. The language has no alphabet; there is instead a defective and irregular system of radicals and phonetics that forms some sort of basis.

Though in colloquial Chinese, as in colloquial English, only a thousand or so words are used, it must be borne in mind that these words are independent one of the other, and are not composed—as our words are composed—of the commutations and combinations of a very few letters. A Chinese printing-press has to have at command ten to fifty thousand characters, where an English press merely possesses multiple sets of the letters of the alphabet; it is just as if the English

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press had to hold each word, in its completed form, of the English language, instead of merely having to compose such word from the letters of which it is formed. A Chinese typewriter is out of the question. A Chinese book is written in vertical columns, which follow each other from right to left. The strain on the eye and brain of the foreign reader entailed by this radical subversion of the method of reading to which he and his ancestors have been accustomed, accounts more for the weakness of sight that afflicts the student of this language than does the minuteness and illegibility of the characters themselves. The Chinese language must go.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY AND FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS AND CONCESSIONS

It is obvious that the foreign governments could not allow their nationals to be subject to the administrative and legislative executives of China. In the boasted civilisation of China law and justice are so administered that the Powers have been compelled, in the interests of their nationals, to impose on China the indignity of extra-territoriality—the doctrine that makes the laws of each country operative on its own nationals. British subjects in China are under the jurisdiction, not of the Chinese authorities, but of their own officials—the Minister at Peking, the Consuls,

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and the Supreme Court for China and Korea.

This extra-territoriality is a perennial source of friction between the Powers and China, but there can be no question of its abolition until China shall have set her house thoroughly in order; until the administration of law occupies, in China, as high a position of respect and dignity as it does in the countries of Europe.

That the time will come when the laws of China will apply to all within her territory, irrespective of nationality, and come in the immediate future, cannot be doubted. The progressive spirit, anti-foreign though it may be, and worldly wisdom that animates the reform party of China, will make strenuous efforts to justify the removal of this national indignity.

Extra-territoriality was abolished in Japan, and, though there is still ample room for improvement, each year sees

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## EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY

fewer complaints against the administration of the law in that country.

There can be little doubt that the foreign governments themselves will welcome a state of affairs in China that will allow of the abolition of this source of perpetual friction, not only between the Powers and China, but also between the individual Powers themselves.

The conflict of jurisdiction in the foreign settlements and concessions necessitates much tact and forbearance. A typical illustration is afforded by the case of the "Alhambra," a gambling establishment situated just beyond the settlement limits at Shanghai. Though the house was not within settlement limits, it was, of course, expressly intended for the delectation of the inhabitants of the concessions. British morality, rightly or wrongly, sets its face against public gambling establishments; the "Alhambra" was to Shanghai what a Monte Carlo within a half-hour's drive would be to



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London : the City Fathers determined to suppress it. Being outside the settlement, the house did not come under the municipal bye-laws. It was, however, kept by a foreigner, against whom proceedings could be taken. The difficulties experienced in establishing the ownership, then the nationality of the owner, and then of convincing the Consul concerned of the undesirability of the establishment, were extraordinary : just as the way had been smoothed, the ownership would pass and the whole trouble would recommence. Eventually all the Consuls — there are fourteen nationalities represented at Shanghai by their own Consuls — gave a blank order against the establishment, the municipal road leading to it was blocked, and, finally, the place was raided by the municipal police and the roulette wheel destroyed. The author understands that the place was reopened this summer, and supposes that the ownership must now be nominally Chinese.

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The case shows the ease with which unscrupulous men can evade the law by playing on the conflicting jurisdictions that are the outcome of extra-territoriality.

Another illustration of this was provided by the campaign instituted by Judge Wifley, of the United States Supreme Court, against the *demi-mondaines* that flourish in the treaty ports of China. These ladies were, from geographical reasons, chiefly Americans, so much so that the learned Judge considered that the prestige of the nation called for drastic steps. The ladies in question, to whom exception can be taken in the vast majority of instances on the grounds of abstract morality only, secured immunity from molestation by buying husbands of a more tolerant nationality. It should be stated, that the Judge's campaign, for reasons that appeal chiefly to people who know the East, did not receive the support and sympathy of the foreign governments, or of the general

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body of foreign residents in the Far East.

In commercial cases the conflict of jurisdictions is still more apparent. The rule is that the plaintiff follows the defendant ; thus a German firm sues an English one in the British Court ; a British plaintiff goes to the court of the defendant's nationality, and so on. The absence of one law governing all contracts has a tendency to hamper commerce. It is the Britisher's lament that, subject himself to the strictest of legal codes, he is considerably handicapped in favour of rival merchants, the laws of whose nationality allow a freer scope and a wider tolerance. This is especially true with regard to company promoting. No one desires that our code should be relaxed ; rather is it hoped that other countries will see fit to impose an equally high standard of morality amongst their nationals. The abolition of extra-territoriality and the consequent application of Chinese law—duly reformed and

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## EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY

approved by the Powers—will be of benefit to our nationals as placing them and their competitors on an equal footing. The settlements and concessions are also a perpetual source of friction between the Powers and China: the abolition of extra-territoriality—when that is rendered possible by the Chinese themselves—will solve these troubles also. Shanghai is the largest foreign settlement and concession in China: it illustrates more than any the causes which lead to international wrangling. The foreign settlement of Shanghai is, as we have seen, a modern, sanitary, and extremely go-ahead town, so much so that the advantages it offers have found such favour in the eyes of the Chinese that they are crowding into it in yearly increasing numbers. The original concession was small; a subsequent extension relieved matters temporarily, but so attractive to the natives is residence in a town where person and property are inviolate that the over-



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crowding has continued, and further extension is absolutely essential. This the Chinese authorities have, in the interests of their sovereign rights, in the last few years persistently refused; the Shanghai Municipal Council has lost no opportunity of pointing out the paramount necessity for a substantial extension, the foreign governments have from the first given their strong support, but nothing has come of it.

The same forces are working at the other concessions and settlements in China: the overcrowding continues and there is the same refusal on the part of the Chinese Government to grant extensions. The necessity for extension is caused by the crass stupidity and maladministration of the Chinese bureaucracy.

Substantial Chinese, indeed Chinese of all classes, have sought security and freedom in the foreign settlements, they have placed their money in the foreign banks.



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Every disturbance in China increases this movement. The present rebellion has seen thousands of Chinese taking refuge in the foreign concessions : many lakhs of taels have gone into the foreign banks, and the author has no doubt that when the final débâcle ensues the very bureaucrats that have so violently opposed settlement extension will themselves find retreat in the foreign settlements.

These settlements have contributed more than anything else to the downfall of official corruption in China : they have been a living object-lesson in the advantages of good government that has by contrast opened the eyes of the populace; the drain of money and the migration of substantial families to the settlements have brought home to the officials themselves some tangible and disagreeable results of their maladministration.

The moral influence of the foreign settlements has been of incalculable benefit

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to the Reform Party of China. These settlements have always been a thorn in the flesh of the corrupt officialdom, and will always be until that officialdom is regenerated *in toto*.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE LATE DOWAGER EMPRESS

FOR the last sixty years, that is, for practically the whole period of China's Treaty relations with the Powers, a woman has been the autocrat of China. This is the more remarkable when we bear in mind the position of woman in China; the submissive subservience that is demanded of her, as of a creature of a lower plane. Despite every handicap the late Dowager Empress Tzŭ Hsi ruled China as an absolute autocrat for over half a century. Born of a noble Manchu family, Tzŭ Hsi entered the household of the Emperor Hsien Fêng as a secondary wife. As we have seen, there is no stigma of immorality or ignominy attached to this position in

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China. To be selected for the Emperor's harem is a very high honour for a Manchu princess. Tzŭ Hsi was one of many in the household, and there was no particular reason why she should be singled out as a favourite. She was undersized and not particularly beautiful, even as beauty goes in China. She soon, however, secured great influence over the degenerate Emperor, whom she persuaded to nominate the son she had borne him heir to the throne.

On Hsien Fêng's death this infant became Emperor under the title T'ung Chih ; Tzŭ Hsi naturally became Regent. Thenceforth she held the reins of government until her death in 1908. The Regency of the Dowager Empress would naturally lapse on the attainment by the child Emperor of his majority.

Strange things happen in Oriental palaces ; it is enough to mention the fact that T'ung Chih died at a moment extremely convenient to the Regent.



## THE LATE DOWAGER EMPRESS

T'ung Chih's wife, pregnant at the time, followed him with sensational rapidity; she died from grief, it was officially announced. The Dowager Empress made her sister's infant son Emperor, and secured for herself a renewed period of Regency.

The new Emperor, styled Kuang Hsü, was the deceased Emperor's cousin, and as such his succession was totally irregular; the Dowager Empress had, however, secured by this time such predominance in Peking that the appointment passed without untoward incident. Kuang Hsü was on the throne until his death in 1908, and was before and after attaining his majority, the obedient servant of the Dowager Empress. Perhaps he owed his life to his amiable acquiescence in her suzerainty; he was a man who had few interests outside his harem. Had he shown a tendency to interfere in practical politics we can have no doubt that some plausible malady would have carried him

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off, and that his place would have been filled by an infant, entailing another long period of Regency.

The Dowager Empress was a strong, unscrupulous woman, and attained her ends by the drastic methods that obtain at Oriental courts. We cannot judge the statesmen and intrigues of the East by European standards. Humanity, honour, and fair play—virtues from our point of view—are considered by the Chinese mere fatal weaknesses.

An incident in the Taiping rebellion illustrates this divergence of thought. At the bombarding of one of the last strongholds of the Taiping rebels, the Chinese statesman, Li Hung-chang, and the famous Gordon sent in a demand for capitulation with a promise that the lives of the Taiping leaders should be spared. The demand was acceded to, the leaders capitulated and were executed out of hand by order of Li Hung-chang. Gordon's anger knew no bounds. Li, who

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had acted according to a code of morality that had found acceptance in his land for ages, was compelled to hide from Gordon, who, revolver in hand, sought him out to avenge a course of conduct that seemed to him an outrage on honour and humanity. It was with the greatest difficulty that Gordon could be dissuaded from relinquishing his appointment.

The Dowager Empress was all her life extremely anti-foreign and reactionary ; astute in her dealings with internal politics and palace intrigues, she seemed incapable of appreciating the strength or the disposition of the Powers.

The Boxer outbreak of 1900 saw her in a difficult position. This uprising was in its inception anti-dynastic and anti-bureaucratic ; it was fostered by revolutionary organisations making capital out of the distress and misery of the populace, and was actuated originally by the same motives that are behind the present rebellion. The officials, following the usual

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practice, succeeded in diverting it against the foreigner. From anti-dynastic it became anti-foreign. Unchecked, the movement gathered immense force ; it became hopelessly beyond the control of the authorities. The Dowager Empress seems to have been won over to a belief in its ultimate triumph. Always antagonistic to the foreigner, she at last threw in her lot with the Boxers. The débâcle followed, and the Court fled to Sianfu. The Powers took charge ; severe retribution was exacted, and the Court was permitted to return : humiliated, chastened, and frightened, the Dowager Empress and her Court were re-established in Peking. The reactionary party had been broken up ; such of its leaders as were not executed were banished ; the reformers came into power, the exclusive Manchu Court became accessible ; audiences became of frequent occurrence ; the Dowager Empress began to give garden parties to the Legation ladies, the Court began to look like any

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European Court, modern schools were established all over the country, native newspapers sprang up on all sides, and pursued for several years an unchecked career of criticism.

Yuan Shih-kai was the man of the hour. He had set his face strongly against the Boxers, and had maintained law and order in the province of Shantung, of which he was Governor, with an iron hand. At that time, however, his voice was without influence at Peking, and the Empress embraced the Boxer cause.

On the Court's return from Sianfu, Yuan became the Dowager Empress's right-hand man. Gradually, however, the reactionary party revived; the lessons of 1900 were forgotten; anti-foreign obstruction again became the order of the day. Yuan and his supporters lost their influence, and China in 1908 was scarcely better than in 1898. The reforms were neglected; a rigorous campaign was instituted against the newly-established Press:



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newspapers were arbitrarily suppressed, and, in general, the old régime with all its vices was re-established.

In 1908 the Emperor Kuang Hsü died : the Dowager Empress, Tzŭ Hsi, died two days later. The infant, Pu Yi, came to the throne under the title Hsüan T'ung. His father, Prince Chun, a reactionary of the worst type and Yuan Shih-kai's bitter opponent, became Regent. Yuan was dismissed : the edict put it that he suffered from a bad leg, and was in consequence compelled to resign his post.

Such was China's position in the beginning of 1909 : obstructive, anti-foreign, and reactionary. The revolutionary organisations were making giant progress : they were waking up to a comprehension of their real enemies. The growing enlightenment of the populace was of great assistance to their propaganda. The revolution of this winter has once more brought home to the reactionary party the folly of their ways.

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Panic-stricken, they hastened to recall Yuan Shih-kai; the delay he at first evinced at accepting their overtures threw them into despair. He was accorded *carte blanche*, and became the dictator of China. But it was too late to save the dynasty. Yuan Shih-kai has accepted the inevitable, and has flung in his lot with the Reform Party, whose chief he becomes.

## CHAPTER XX

### SIR ROBERT HART

No book on China and Chinese affairs would be complete without some reference to the indomitable Irishman who for over half a century controlled the destinies of the only reliable source of Chinese revenue.

On the resignation of Mr. Lay, the first Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, Sir Robert Hart, then a junior in the British Consular service in China, was offered and accepted the vacant post. That he held this position until his death this year (1911) is a remarkable tribute to his tact and character. In the course of over fifty years' autocratic control of the Imperial Maritime Customs, he or-

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## SIR ROBERT HART

ganised and built up a large, efficient, and absolutely upright service for the collection of the Customs Revenues of China. The Customs service is a standing example to the Chinese people of an honest officialdom : it has always been above suspicion and has had a correspondingly important influence on a nation that suffers, and has apparently always suffered, from a corrupt bureaucracy. The revenue collected by the Customs is the only dependable asset and security the Central Government of China possesses for the negotiation of loans. China's credit as a borrower depends on her foreign administrated Customs. It has been Sir Robert's dream to gradually introduce native gentlemen into the customs on an equality with the foreign assistants. With this view, he established a school, presided over by Mr. Brewitt-Taylor, one of the Commissioners of Customs, for the instruction and training of suitable candidates. Chinese assistants



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have received appointments and have been found to be as impartial and upright as their European colleagues: there is even a Chinese Commissioner of Customs, the highest rank in the service. The service itself is of a very high grade; its efficiency is undoubted: a system of pensions and of compulsory retirement at a certain age would have no doubt removed a very legitimate grievance amongst the members of the Service. At the present moment—there being no pension—senior officers are apt to remain at their posts until advanced age, to the prejudice of their juniors: “few die and none resign.” The consequence is a deadlock in promotion.

It is remarkable that such an obviously advantageous reform did not commend itself to Sir Robert Hart, who, it must be remembered, had an absolutely free hand in the organisation and control of the service.

The efficient lighting and policing of the

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coast must also be counted amongst the achievements of the late Inspector-General. The whole of the vast coastline of China is suitably supplied with lighthouses and buoys : Customs cruisers patrol the shores. A Postal and Telegraph administration that might well be the pride of any nation of Europe, owes its inception and organisation to the genius of Sir Robert Hart.

Sir Robert has always been, first and foremost, the servant of the Chinese people. He has served his employers with unflinching loyalty. In a position in which he might have advanced the interests of any one Power, he always unswervingly adhered to the nation whose servant he was. There has perhaps been no man on the face of the globe who has been the recipient of so many and so varied distinctions from all and every nation. He is a baronet of the United Kingdom ; his European titles would fill a volume ; his Asiatic a set of volumes.

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The interests of China were, however, always his chief and indeed only aim. Personally he did not shine socially; he lacked the graces that make for social success. He had not at his command that flowing stream of inanities we term "small talk," and was often awkward and obviously ill at ease. There could scarcely have been, however, a more gracious or punctilious host. Latterly he was very accessible. His Wednesday garden parties in the summer, and Wednesday dinners and dances in the winter months, were prominent features of the social side of life at Peking.

It is as impossible for our generation to appreciate the force of Sir Robert Hart's personality and character, as it is for us to understand the genius of the Bernhardts. The enthusiasm, strength, and energy of his early days had given place to the cautious judgment and broad tolerance that experience and advancing years had engendered. Tolerance was

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the keynote to his later days. A great knowledge of human nature led him to expect little and to overlook everything. China's ingratitude did not apparently wound him. He took the 1900 business philosophically. Later, the establishment of the Shui Wu Chu—a Board of Control of the Customs Organisation, of which up till then Sir Robert had been sole autocrat—left him unmoved.

In *The Romance of a Great Career*, by Juliet Bredon (Sir Robert Bredon's daughter and Sir Robert Hart's niece), we have an intimate personal study of a great Proconsul.

His personality was impressive, quiet, and resolute: such was the man who was China's foreign adviser during fifty years of change and turmoil. His book, *These from the Land of Sinim*, gives us an insight into his views on Chinese affairs which is, in view of the present revolution, of the greatest interest.

Quiet, resolute, and loyal, Sir Robert

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Hart was one of the greatest men of his day and age.

After his death the Chinese Government conferred on him the highest honour known in China: they ennobled his ancestors.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE FUTURE

CHINA is the last place in the world for the prophet. One may draw a clear and logical conclusion from perfectly accurate premises, and yet find oneself totally wrong: logic, such as we Westerners define it, finds no place in the Chinese heart, nor does the Chinaman, privately or collectively, act in given circumstances in the way that common sense—again as defined by us—demands that he should act; nor does he *invariably* act contrary to our ideas of common sense; to expect the unexpected in China is no wiser than to rely on probabilities. The oldest and astutest foreign residents in the Middle Kingdom are often the farthest out in

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their prognostications of the future, and it is nowadays not a little difficult to get them to voice any opinion at all on the subject. We can, however, marshal the facts and elements in the Chinese situation, and leave the intelligent reader to arrive at what seems to him should be the fate of the Celestial race.

First and foremost, it must be borne in mind that the poverty and distress of the vast majority of the population of China is something terrible; that this poverty exists side by side with enormous wealth held in comparatively few hands, is to be expected when we remember that great wealth in any civilisation entails the opposite extreme of great want. The vast majority of the people of China are always on the brink of starvation, and are consequently always in a state in which any relaxation of official control is apt to have far-reaching and terrible consequences. The demagogue could find no happier hunting-ground than China, a

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fact which the Chinese revolutionists fully appreciated.

In China, Anarchy ever sits expectant. From news to hand we know that she has seized her opportunity, and that the Western provinces of China are in her thrall.

The pirates who infest the West and Canton Rivers and the coasts of China have taken a new lease of life. The notorious Hunghutzus of Manchuria have not failed to take advantage of the disturbed condition of affairs.

The first factor, then, in the Chinese situation is the widespread chronic distress which lends itself so perfectly to revolutionary propaganda.

The schools, which were established all over China after the fateful year 1900, and the newspapers, which have sprung up on all sides, have contributed their quota to the situation, in bringing home to the people a sense of the backwardness and impotence of their country amongst the

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nations of the world, an ignominious position due entirely to official corruption and maladministration. It is this sense of national indignity and injury that makes an ardent reformer of every foreign-educated Chinaman, who by his numbers represents a very important factor in the political situation. Most of these returned students received their education in Japan, America comes next, and then England and Germany. It does not, however, follow that the bulk of these reformers are pro-Japanese. For some reason or other Japan is not popular in China.

The revolutionaries are of the same class as the rulers of China ; they all belong to the *literati*. The revolution was really a struggle for power between two sections of the ruling caste of China—a struggle between those who hold and those who do not hold office. The great mass of the people took no part in the fight ; their sympathies were won by the reformers, as was inevitable, considering

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that reform could not leave them in a worse condition than is theirs to-day, and might conceivably alter their lives and fortunes for the better. The people of China are mere spectators of the drama that is unfolding itself out there. The pretence of a national referendum was a mere move in the political game.

An end has now happily been put to chaos and anarchy by an amicable settlement in which the dynasty, itself a mere pawn in the game, has been pensioned off.

It is interesting to recount the manner in which the *literati* became split up in two opposing factions. The government of China is in the hands of this class, from which is recruited by competitive examination the entire civil service; a successful candidate becomes *ipso facto* an official of "expectant" rank; and is placed on the waiting list for an official appointment. As the number of appoint-



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ments is very much less than the number of "expectants," and as also private influence—in which is included bribery—has much to say in the matter of securing posts, it follows that many capable men find their careers hopelessly blocked. In the old days their energies would naturally be diverted into literary channels, and it is to them that are due the voluminous libraries of China.

These out-of-works were always, however, a thorn in the *literati* flesh. When it became the fashion to send Chinese students abroad, it naturally happened that the men chosen were chiefly of this faction, that is, men to whom office was a very distant expectation: men who already held office or whose position was such that office would come to them automatically, preferred to stay at home, for foreign ideas were not popular with them, and foreign travel suggested neither pleasure nor profit. The exiles returned, imbued with foreign ideals

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and fired with visions of a perfect state, and of course found no official outlet for their reforming ideas or for their energies. Of such is the revolutionary party that is upsetting the Far East, and, though some of them are mere adventurers, most are fervent patriots strongly determined to shrink from nothing until they have rid the country of the foul bureaucracy that cripples it, and have raised China to the place she is entitled to hold amongst the nations of the world. Such a man is Sun Yat-sen; no pursuer of personal advantages, always ready to retire when the interests of his country demand it; strong, persevering, and relentless in his fight for national freedom and national greatness.

These men saw their chance when foreign-drilled armies began to be established in China. Incessant and persevering propaganda won these armies to their cause and enabled the reformers to take the field. They were opposed by the effete

## CHINA AS IT REALLY IS

Manchu troops and by those very capable Chinese troops that remained loyal. Their loyalty was not to the throne so much as to the personality of Yuan Shih-kai, who is all for a limited monarchy. Yuan is supposed to be firmly convinced that a republic is impossible in China, and that the prestige and figure-head of a monarch is indispensable to the strong and successful government of China. He has, however, in the interests of peace, sunk his private views and has accepted and established the Republic of China.

It is argued that a republic is totally unsuited to an Eastern people like the Chinese: that the monarchical idea is firmly rooted in the Eastern mind: that the abolition of a central Imperial figure will lead to chaos and to the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire. As an argument it is plausible, but it is merely an argument, an assertion. The author is of the opinion that a republican government would suit the Chinese as well as it

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suits any other people. Provided there be a strong central authority—it matters little which form the actual government takes. The Chinese are remarkably adaptable: they live and thrive in all parts of the world and under all types of government.

A strong central authority is necessary to keep the various provinces together, but that central control may just as well be embodied in a President as in an Emperor. Provincial autonomy has, in practice, always existed: there is no reason to fear that a governor-general appointed by a central parliament will find his task more difficult than his Imperially-appointed predecessors.

One feels convinced that all China now requires is a strong central government, determined to put down official corruption and to develop the country rationally and expeditiously.

In the hands of such a government China will soon become a World-Power



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easily able to hold her territory against aggression. Before she can take her place amongst the Great Powers, however, she must in one respect be rebarbarised : the discredit into which the cult of arms has fallen must give place to colossal armaments and strenuous militarism.

With her wealth of internal resources and her teeming millions, a Westernised China must sooner or later count as the controlling factor in the industrial and military struggles of the world.

What will happen when such a China begins to look abroad for markets and colonies ?



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE PASSING OF THE MANCHU

THE child Emperor of China has abdicated : after many tedious weeks of entreaties and threats, vacillations and indignities, tears and fears, the Manchus have at last recognised the inevitable and have retired with as much grace as they could muster. Everything has been done to save the face of the passing dynasty : the Emperor has rescued his spiritual overlordship from the wreck of his temporal power : the abdication is supposedly voluntary and is promulgated in three edicts which purport to show that the Throne is acting magnanimously in recognising the people's desire for a republic, and that the Emperor's with-

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drawal from political power is actuated solely by a fervent desire to remove an obstacle to the restoration of peace.

The Manchus are wise in their generation: their going was inevitable; their troops are troops in name only; they have relied all through the crisis on Yuan Shih-kai and the Chinese armies that are loyal to him, and Yuan has tried and has failed to secure the dynasty a new lease of life. His view that a Limited Monarchy is the only form of government for China, did not find acceptance with the Revolutionists, and Yuan—himself an ardent reformer—has come to terms with the rebels by which he has secured the Presidency of the Republic for himself and an honourable and lucrative retirement for the Manchus. The latter are wise to accept this settlement in preference to adopting the policy of “the last ditch” advocated by some of the younger Princes: such a policy could have had no other result than a short struggle

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## THE PASSING OF THE MANCHU

against the combined troops of Yuan Shih-kai and the Revolutionaries, ending in the annihilation of their race and the confiscation of their hoarded treasures.

The Manchus have suffered the fate of all the various dynasties that have held sway in China : they came one and all by the sword, and by the sword they have gone.

They came to China, as we have seen, at the request of one of the parties to a civil war that was in progress ; their martial skill won the day : they disowned their hosts and established their own dynasty in Peking : this in 1644. The first Emperors were men of ability and character, and under their rule commerce, art, and scholarship flourished, and the country prospered exceedingly. Then followed the usual procession of Imperial failures : security and success brought their usual evils. The Emperors were no longer leaders of men, they became nerveless devotees of pleasure. Favour-

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ites of the harem and their sexless attendants ruled the Court. Intrigue and official corruption became the order of the day, and the dynasty grew effete. The Manchu people, numbering four millions all told, have lived ever since the establishment of the dynasty on an Imperial dole. Three centuries of living on this charity have changed a nation of soldiers into a herd of weak parasites.

Four millions of Manchus have nominally controlled four hundred millions of Chinese for nearly three hundred years: in reality, however, the Chinese have ruled themselves. In their usual relentless way they absorbed their conquerors, so that to-day the races are indistinguishable. At first the officials, both central and provincial, were Manchu, but gradually they were replaced by Chinese until the latter vastly predominated. The Manchus became Chinese in language, habits, and appearance; they succumbed to the marvellous power of absorption that

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## THE PASSING OF THE MANCHU

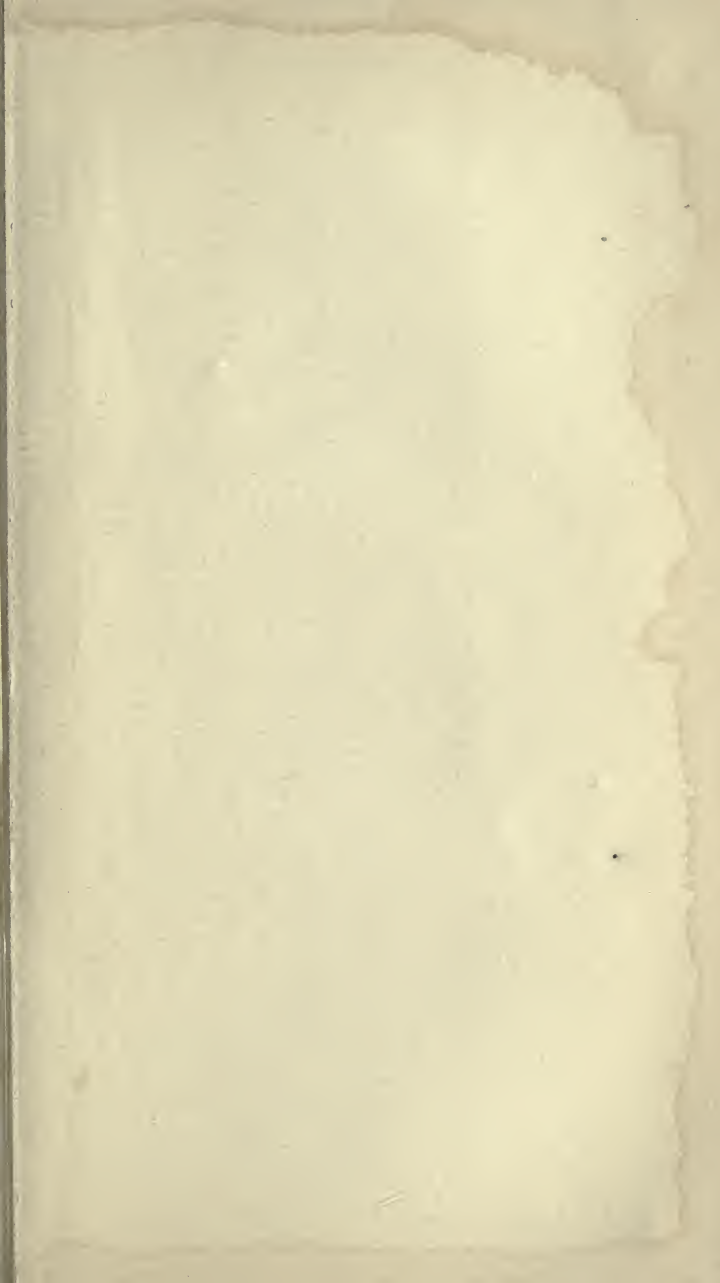
is characteristic of China, the only country in the world in which a community of the Jewish race has lost its identity.

The present revolution was not an anti-dynasty one, all appearances and claims to the contrary notwithstanding. It was a struggle between two sections of the ruling caste of China for the mastery, a fight between the foreign educated Chinaman and the old régime of reactionary bureaucracy. The Manchu dynasty was a mere pawn in the game: it has served its purpose and is now pensioned off.

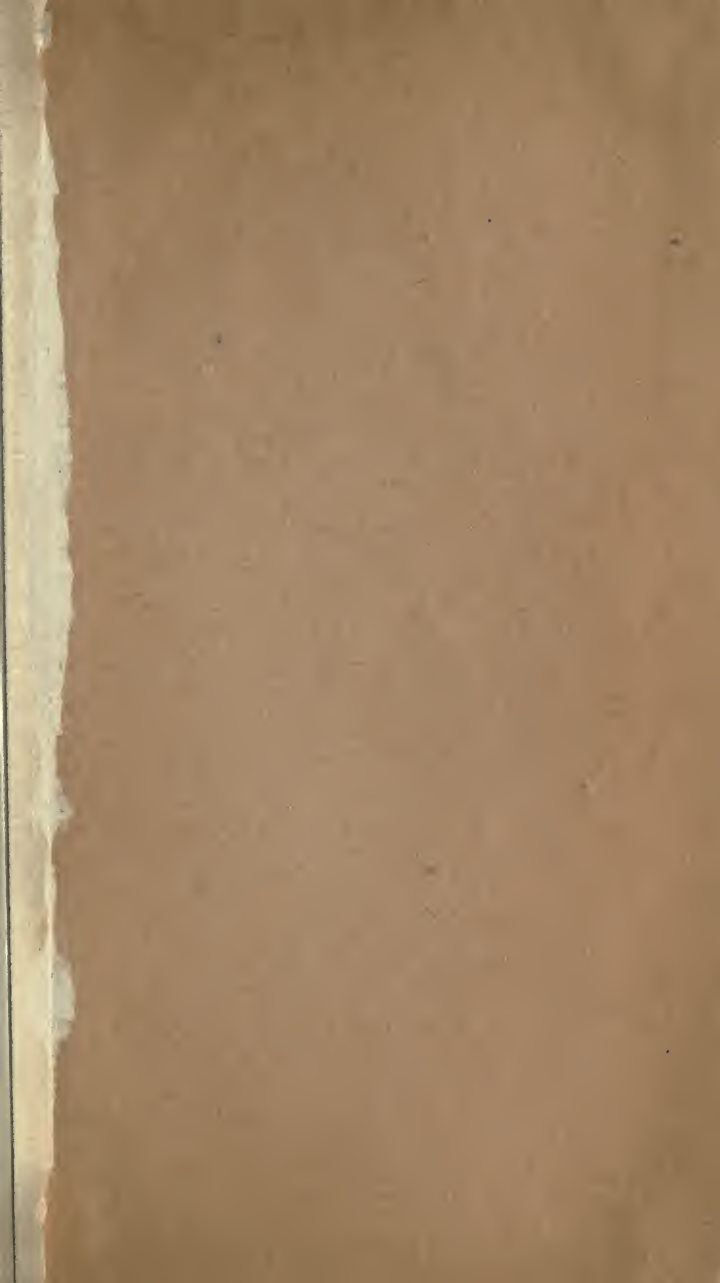
The foreign educated Chinaman has prevailed, but it remains to be seen whether the coalition between Yuan Shih-kai and Sun Yat-sen is capable of constructive work of enduring merit: it has a free field ahead: whatever it does it can hardly make a greater mess of things than did the bureaucracy it has succeeded.



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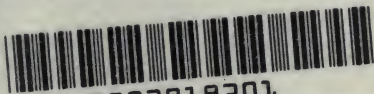
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